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ABSTRACT

Given that in a community, there will be some parents who make use of preschool provision and some who do not, are there any discernible differences or similarities between the two groups of parents? Do the reasons parents offer for use or disuse, however cogent they may be, mask a more fundamental difference between families who do not take part in preschool provision and those who do? These are problems to which this exploratory study seeks answers. The Hillington Borough Council allowed researchers to monitor its program of establishing playgroups run by Tenants' Associations on some of its housing estates. One such estate, 'Hillcroft', housing a reasonably homogeneous community of working class families, became the focus of this study. Among the major findings, almost one-third of the families did not take up preschool provision which was available and guaranteed for their children. Negative responses were made to preschool provision in general. Results suggest that the degree of awareness and enthusiasm which mothers showed for preschooling was a reflection of the mother's own psychological situation. A large proportion of mothers interviewed had personal problems which precluded other than marginal concern for planned provision for their children. (Author/RH)

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PARENTAL RESPONSE TO PRE-SCHOOL PROVISION

A study of 77 families, focussing on the characteristics of those who chose not to use a new community playgroup.

by

SHEILA SHINMAN

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All unhappy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

(Tolstoy: Anna Karenina)

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INTRODUCTION

This report consists of extracts from a thesis in course of preparation at Brunel University and carried out within the Department of Education.

The study has been supervised by Willem van der Eyken, initially in the capacity of Senior Research Fellow within the Department. Subsequently, when he became Deputy Director (Development) at the National Children's Bureau, he kindly agreed to continue on an informal basis and he has been closely associated with the project at every stage. Formal responsibility passed to the Head of Department, Professor W D Furneaux, who has given much detailed advice on choice and methods of analysis.

A grant (HR1944) from the Social Science Research Council made the initial part of the study possible.

Support and active co-operation with the study was readily given by Council members of the Housing Committee of the London Borough of Hillingdon, whose Deputy Director of Social Services (Research), Mr M Tidball, took a personal interest in the project. I am indebted to him and to many members of the Education, Health and Social Service Departments for their help, and in particular to the late Mrs Jean Newman, the Borough's former Pre-School Playgroups Adviser, for her unique contribution to the fieldwork.

Miss Karen Bartlett, a social science undergraduate at Brunel University at the time, played an important part in the early stages of the fieldwork, and I am grateful to her for her assistance.

A study of this kind involves a great deal of voluntary assistance, and I would like to record my thanks to M Robert Baldy, formerly of the Department of Education, and staff within the computing services of Brunel University, as well as Mrs Mollie Ashby and Mrs Pamela Knights, who helped to transcribe the numerous tape recordings made during the project.

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Although, for reasons of confidentiality, individuals cannot be named, I owe a particular debt to all those mothers who co-operated in the study, to the playgroup supervisors, to the committee members of the relevant Tenants' Associations, and especially to those in "Hillcroft", all of whom gave so generously and unstintingly of their time.

I would also like to express my thanks to fellow students in the Department of Education at Brunel University who have spent more than a few of their seminars discussing and critically assessing the work reported here and whose comments have proved a valuable aid; and finally, for their help, criticism and support, I would like to thank my own family, who have lived with the research problems thrown up by 77 other families for a very long time.

Sheila Shinman

Brunel University, November 1975

PART I THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Pre-school provision - the present situation

Future plans for pre-school provision for the under-fives were included in the Education White Paper, "Framework for Expansion", published in December 1972. A 10 year programme proposed eventual free nursery education for all three and four year old children whose parents wished it. Responsibility would lie with local authorities to plan their provision "so as to prepare a scheme in their areas in which nursery classes and schools, voluntary playgroups, day nurseries and other forms of day-care all play their part" (Para. 23). Nevertheless, it was considered that "it would be right for most of the extra nursery provision to take the form of classes for the under fives forming part of primary schools..." (Para. 24). Part-time attendance was regarded as sufficient, "indeed preferable", for most children, and these plans were made "on the basis of half-time attendance..." (Para. 26), the intention was "to maintain the present overall ratio of pupils to adult staff of 13:1"(Para. 32).

Aims underlying these proposals were explicitly set out (Paragraphs 19, 20):-

> "The value of nursery education in promoting the social development of young children has long been acknowledged. In addition we know that, given sympathetic and skilled supervision, children may also make great educational progress before the age of five. They are capable of developing further in the use of language, in thought and in practical skills than was previously supposed. Progress of this kind gives any child a sound basis for his subsequent education. The opportunities which the new policy offers for families living in deprived areas - both urban and rural - in bringing up their children will be particularly important"; "priority will be given in the early stages of the programme to areas of disadvantage" (Para. 28).

The importance of the new provision was defined predominantly within the fields of social and educational development; moreover, it was implied that pre-schooling in general would act in an "interventionist" way to help those in deprived areas. Yet American experience in Headstart (Cicirelli et al., 1969) has shown that although some pre-school intervention programmes have resulted in social and cognitive gain amongst disadvantaged

children, it is the precise content and approach of these programmes which is associated with effective compensatory education rather than generalised pre-school activity (i.e. day nurseries, playgroups and nursery classes) such as one might find in existing provision in England.

Nevertheless some Educational Priority Area projects in England (Halsey, 1972) which concentrated on community involvement and adaptations of American structured schemes, have had sufficiently promising results (Review of Red House Programme, p. 115) for teachers and researchers to stress "the importance of 100% cover so that all children entering the reception classes had been to a nursery group". A similar conclusion is drawn from a recent study (Cohen and Bagshaw, 1973) of children aged between three and four in a nursery school from both relatively advantaged and disadvantaged homes and a similar group of non-nursery school children. Results suggest that "where there is provision for some and not for others...non-nursery working class children already performing linguistically at a lower level than the middle class children will find the differential even greater when they attain primary school age and enter into competition with children who have already two years of nursery schooling behind them. For disadvantaged children, this gap is likely to be correspondingly greater."

Two inter-related fields of study are therefore discernible; one is concerned with the need to know more about the most effective strategies for pre-school intervention as it affects the educational and social development of the child; the other, on which we shall focus, centres on the factors which influence take-up of provision and the desirability of "100% cover." This is not to argue in favour of compulsory attendance or to say that those parents who are unconvinced of the value of pre-school education and who are happy and confident in keeping their under fives at home should be under social compunction to make use of nursery facilities; it is rather to suggest that, given provision "on demand", it is expedient to probe any evidence indicating the possibility that even quite small groups of people, although expressing a desire for pre-school provision, may be unable to avail themselves of the facilities. This is especially true if such groups are found to predominate among the disadvantaged.

The concept of disadvantage is itself open to several kinds of interpretation. One approach has been to define it through area (Plowden, 1967) which has resulted in the setting up of Educational Priority Areas and an infusion there of Urban Aid Funds. Although a convenient administrative tool, this approach has drawbacks; it limits the interpretation of

disadvantage to lack of amenity, especially lack of schools,and particular districts of high social and physical deficiencies. There is a danger that unless careful local analyses are made of both need and existing provision, pockets of greatest need even within an Educational Priority Area may not be identified (Parfit , 1969).

Another approach derives from class structure. Numerous studies have shown an association between class and educational achievement. A recent investigation into the social conditions of British children in which the main criteria of disadvantage were low income, poor housing and large, or one parent, families, found that only one in 25 was middle class and 'disadvantaged'. Disadvantage by this definition is therefore seen as concentrated amongst the working classes (Wedge and Prosser, 1973).

While such criteria may cover some of the most extreme types of deprivation, it is clear that there are other sources of disadvantage which are not limited to specific areas and which cut across all classes. Children in high rise flats or in rural isolation, handicapped children, those who lose one or both parents, suffer from deficiency in diet or excessive noise, are obvious examples. There may be other reasons, however, for observed social class differences which originate in the early parent-child relationship, and influence the child's educational opportunity long before he gets to school. Evidence in a recent study which attempted to probe these differences, suggests that some parents, not necessarily because they do not care about their children, but in spite of it, through habits and attitudes which militate against development of skills, inhibit their child's education. (Miller, 1971) If it is anywhere near right that one in 16 children is seriously disadvantaged (Wedge and Prosser, 1973) and there are possibly many others who would benefit from positive discrimination, it is vital to know the extent to which any new provision is likely to achieve its objective and reach the disadvantaged.

There is little doubt that since the Campaign for Nursery Education began in 1965, the pressure of public opinion has moved in favour of pre-school provision. In 1968, only 18 Local Education Authorities gave support to the so-called 'Lollipop Lobby'. Four years later, 72 out of 153 sent encouraging messages in support of the Petition for Nursery Education: a further 40 expressed sympathy. Nor was expression of the needs of the under fives limited to professionals: the Campaign had support from ordinary mothers throughout the country. It was also the determination of mothers to do something for their children in the absence of government action which was instrumental in

the phenomenal growth of the Pre-school Playgroups Association during the past decade (an increase in membership from 550 in 1965 to 8300 in 1973).

Further indication of widespread support for pre-school education is evident from numerous surveys carried out up and down the country. Most of these have been small; they aimed to assess local need and to produce figures with which to convince the authorities of the necessity for adequate provision. One pilot study on a larger scale aimed to investigate expressed demand and problems of families with young children. In the summer of 1971, two surveys were carried out in a number of districts in two areas - Kirkby, near Liverpool, and London - of 460 families with children of pre-school age (Moss P., Tizard J., Crook J., 1971). Kirkby is predominantly working class and over 90% of the families interviewed were council tenants. In London, three districts were chosen 'more or less at random' and house to house visiting carried out. Here just over 50% of mothers interviewed were council tenants. Although the researchers had reservations about mothers' understanding of the various types of pre-school provision, they found that eight or nine out of ten families wanted some form of pre-schooling. This would be a slightly greater demand than the Plowden estimate ('Children and their Primary Schools', 1967, Para. 328) of a maximum of 90% of four year olds and not more than 50% of three year old children.

Plowden further estimated that provision should be made for 15% of children to attend full time. This 15% ("a rough estimate") comprised 5% of mothers with children between three and five, who work full time (figures based on R. K. Kelsall and S. Mitchell and the Labour Woman's Survey, 1966), and 10% of mothers identified as unable to care effectively for their children.(J. W. B. Douglas and J. M. Bloomfield, 1958). The Kirkby survey found, however, that 25% of the mothers were working, the majority part-time - that is, considerably more than the Plowden estimate; of the remainder, nine out of ten wanted to work. This had to be considered in conjunction with the fact that 21% of the fathers were unemployed and the consequent financial pressure on mothers to work.

As long ago as 1968, the Seebohm Report on Social Services warned that nursery education would not be of use to working mothers unless more day care was provided. Since 1971, the date of the Kirkby Survey, the rate of inflation and the cost of living have increased to such an extent that it is reasonable to suppose there is even greater incentive for a mother to work. If this is so, many thousands of parents will not be able to let their children take advantage of nursery education, because opening hours and holiday closures are inappropriate to their needs. A number of small surveys give

further evidence: in one part of South London, the Crystal Palace Triangle Community Association (1972) reported that the main reason given for the need of pre-school provision was so that mothers could work. It was found that of those who actually used some facility (nursery school, day nursery or playgroup), 25% found the opening times inconvenient. The Lewisham Campaign for Nursery Education, in a survey in Sydenham (1971), found that working mothers in that area did not wish to leave their children with strangers during the day; they chose to work night shifts so that fathers would be at home. The most favoured provision for them (so that they might consider work in the daytime) would be a crèche on factory premises. In this particular area, mothers felt that child minders were too expensive. Elsewhere the widespread use of registered minders and problem pockets of unregistered child minders suggest that a substantial number of children are unlikely to receive nursery education before starting school at five. So a situation exists in which there is increasing pressure on mothers, including one parent families, to work. A minority will get their children into day nurseries or crèches, others may prefer to leave their children with someone they know and trust, a relative or child minder. But where there are not enough good child minders or day care facilities, or opening hours are inconvenient, the needs of neither mother nor child will be met.

Awareness of problems which are likely to ensue from such a situation has led to a suggestion by Dr. Kellmer Pringle for comprehensive units of pre-school provision. The need for flexible day care centres has also been highlighted in the study of 'Trading in Children' (Holman, 1973) which brought the problems of people who work irregular hours into focus - nurses, long distance lorry drivers, shift workers. As a development of the pilot study referred to above (Moss P., Tizard J., Crook J., 1971), two centres are being set up in London to provide an integrated service to include nursery school, one o'clock club, day nursery, clinic, etc, under one roof. This will bring together Health and Social Services, Education and the parents in a quite unique way. This concept of pre-school provision is very different from that outlined in the White Paper, however; here the figure of 15% is taken as a national appraisal of need for day care and emphasis placed on the role of nursery schools and playgroups. If no special steps are taken to meet the need where there are pronounced local variations in the proportions of working to non-working mothers, then it seems likely that conditions will exist that encourage illegal child minding and the consequent disadvantages for the children. Of potentially even greater importance is the difference in preparation for school at five between those who have been to nursery groups and those who have had some other form of

pre-schooling.

In addition to those who will not be able to make use of the facilities because they are not appropriate to their needs, the suggestion has been made that provision 'on demand' will really mean 'middle class demand' (Denby, 1973). At the time of writing, Miss Denby was Development Officer for the National Elfrida Rathbone Society. This organisation is concerned with promoting voluntary community social work on behalf of educationally handicapped children, including those handicapped by their environment. Miss Denby's brief was to help the Society clarify its aims and objectives in the pre-school field. She refers inter alia to the 'prima facie justification' of the view that pre-school places are being filled by middle class as opposed to working class children. She goes on to point out that assuming "nursery education were constructed in such a way that intellectual improvement did result, as applies now for social development...demand, meaning middle class demand... could result in an increased differential...between middle class and working class children by the time tbey reach school."

Although not synonymous in educational terms, disadvantage and working class are often associated together. Given the known association between class and educational achievement and the government's expressed intention that the new provision should be of special benefit to the disadvantaged, it is paradoxical that the suggestion that it is inherently biased towards the middle class can be made at all.

Such a paradox is perhaps reflected in the apparently middle class bias with which the White Paper proposals themselves were reported in the national press. 'The Times' made it front page news and stated that the White Paper "had the potentiality of a major social advance" and the 'Guardian',also on its front page, described it as the "first systematic step since 1870 when compulsory education at the age of five was introduced." The proposals were also welcomed by the 'Daily Telegraph', although the leader recorded disappointment that there was no provision for fee-paying in nursery schools - "these could be made the subject of a means test, and would probably be of greater practical help to poorer children than the present blockbuster discrimination in favour of the deprived areas." Both the 'Daily Mail', which had vigorously backed the Campaign for Nursery Education, and the 'Express', commented favourably, but on their inside pages; in the more popular newspapers, comment was harder to find, negligible and more grudging in its approval. "Take 100 lines, Mrs. Thatcher," wrote the 'Sun', "I must get my priorities right...it doesn't make sense to talk about spending £960,000 on education so soon after stopping free milk for seven

to eleven year olds." A similar pattern emerges in the coverage by the Sunday papers; although the 'Times' and the 'Telegraph' had devoted a considerable number of column inches to the subject in Thursday's paper when the Report was published, an average of some 40 column inches was given to review of the White Paper proposals on Sunday but there was no mention made of them in the 'Sunday Express' or the 'News of the World.' It is indeed paradoxical that those papers read mainly by parents whose children might be thought to be most 'in need', gave least publicity and showed least interest in the proposals.

TABLE SHOWING PRESS COVERAGE OF
THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER ON 6th/7th DECEMBER, 1972.

Daily Papers	Coverage in Column Inches			Total
	Front Page	Editorial	Reportage	
The Times	27 2*	39 2	113 2	179
Manchester Guardian	20½ 2	24 3	148½ 2	193
Daily Telegraph	11 2	7½ 4	65 2	83½
Daily Mail	-	6 2½	20 2	26
Daily Mirror	-	-	23 2	23
The Sun	-	4 3	26 2	30
Daily Express	-	-	44 1¾	44
Morning Star	Front Page	Editorial 9	28½ 2	37½
(Sunday Papers)				
Sunday Times	-	12 3½	57 2	69
Observer	-	11 4	-	11
Sunday Telegraph	-	-	34 2¼	34
Sunday Express	-	-	-	NIL
News of the World	-	-	-	NIL
People				
Sunday Mirror				

* Inset figures show column width

Likelihood of predominantly middle class take-up of pre-school provision is not a universally held view. Indeed, the Kirkby survey (see p. 4) which found that virtually 90% of mothers wanted some form of pre-schooling was of a working class area. A survey of attitudes to nursery schools in a working class community, undertaken by the East Newcastle Action Group in 1971 also suggests a contrary view. The researchers took an area of about one square mile of working class housing where two schools opened nursery classes under the Urban Aid Programme. No part of the area was more than three quarters of a mile from one or other of these schools. The sample was found by following up and interviewing every ninth female on the electoral register if she had any children between the ages of two and six. 116 interviews were obtained. At least half were living on less than £25 a week, 85% had had secondary modern or technical education. 87% of husbands' occupation was manual. 4% of mothers worked full time and 16% part-time. Most families were small with one or two children. Ten statements relating to nursery provision were read without comment and respondents asked to agree or disagree with them. The researchers claimed that the survey revealed "general consistent and emphatic support of nursery education" and that this was "an issue on which the vocal middle class pressure groups have working class support all the way."

There are grounds, however, for thinking that assessment of demand may not be as straightforward as it seems. It is difficult to judge opinion on a complicated issue like pre-school provision from doorstep interviews;* people are likely to make socially acceptable responses or give the answer most likely to terminate the interview quickly.(Hyman, 1954; Kahn and Cannell, 1957). A better test of genuine beliefs might be to provide the facility and study who actually makes use of it. In 1972, Inner London Pre-school Playgroups Association monitored the inception of a new playgroup in a high need area of Lambeth; this different approach to assessment of demand shows the situation in another light.

Once it was known that premises were available, mothers in the immediate area (about half a square mile) were circularised and visited by the playgroup organiser. In a sample of 100 mothers with children under five, when only children of three and four were considered (ie nursery school age), it was found that 29% of these children already went to a playgroup, 36% attended a nursery class and 35% said they made no use of any form of pre-school provision. This latter group comprised 20% who said they didn't want any form of pre-school provision and 15% who, although expressing great enthusiasm and determination to join the playgroup, in fact did not avail themselves of the opportunity. This suggests that there may indeed be a difference between what people say they want

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* there may be subconscious barriers operating against rational reactions (see Bullough, 1972, ch. 4, p. 9)

and what they actually do when they have the opportunity. It casts doubt on the government policy of simple extension of nursery school places as an effective way of compensating the disadvantaged child.

A more detailed study of the use made of pre-school playgroups was reported by Ann Joseph and Jessie Parfit in a pioneer attempt to "evaluate the role and function of playgroups in one area of high social deprivation." In 1970, the National Children's Bureau was commissioned by the government to study the development of 20 playgroups started in the London Borough of Southwark under Phase II of the Urban Aid Programme. £30,000 was allocated to the playgroups and a further £2,000 was set aside for the appointment of a playgroup organiser, while £80,850 was granted to the Local Education Authority for nine new nursery classes.

The Borough of Southwark covers about 11 square miles; it is a densely populated strip of mixed development - predominantly of old, decaying and congested housing with at that time few areas of high rise flats and modern urban development. There are a few middle-class pockets of more pleasant housing with open spaces, but overall, the Borough qualified as an area of high social need. An analysis by ward of areas of high, medium and low need in relation to the quality of provision available led to the extra provision of 480 playgroup places and 540 places in nursery schools and classes in such a way as to level out the principal differences between wards. Nevertheless, there were still five wards out of 18 classed as high or medium need where seven to eight children had to 'queue' for one place. Since the expressed aim of Urban Aid was to help the disadvantaged, the researchers were particularly concerned to see the extent to which they were making use of the facilities, when disadvantage was interpreted as the experiencing of two or more of the following criteria: "presence of handicap; no bathroom; father in unskilled work; no father; three or more siblings; child-minded; immigrant; overcrowded; working mother; known to the Children's Department." It was found that only 38% of the playgroup children fell into this category. The range of such 'disadvantaged' between playgroups varied from 7 to 61%. Although they could not be sure that disadvantaged children were not attending other forms of provision, the researchers felt these findings suggested that many of the most needy children were not attending the playgroups. For example, where it was possible to compare the numbers of particular groups of children at the playgroups with numbers in the comparable groups in the infant school population or in the Borough at large, it was found that, with one exception, there were fewer immigrant children in the playgroups.

Similarly, the percentage of children from large families and/or with fathers in unskilled or semi-skilled workwas no larger than the percentage in the Borough - indeed there was a slightly higher proportion of children whose fathers were skilled manual workers. In fact overcrowding was the only index on which there was a higher proportion of children at the playgroups than in the borough.

What these findings suggest is that not only are the estimates of demand based on doorstep appraisal of need likely to be optimistic, but that many of the parents of the most disadvantaged children are not coming forward to make use of the provision.* Unless this situation can be altered, parents who realise the value of pre-school education are those who will demand it, whilst some of those who are already at a disadvantage for a variety of reasons, may not. The gap between the haves and the have nots would therefore be widened and a fundamental aim of the new provision defeated.

In such a situation, there is clearly a need to examine any relevant factors. Do they lie in the nature of the provision itself, its location or its structure and organisation, or do the roots lie in the family situation, in social and economic pressures, or even in the type of relationship and interaction between the mother and child or the child and his family vis-a-vis the 'outside world'? One cannot assume, in seeking the answer to so complex a question that there will be a common denominator - though of course, there may be. It is more likely that a number of contributing factors will interact to tip the balance between take-up and non take-up of provision.

The N.C.B. Southwark Study drew attention to some basic considerations which could affect use of provision. The researchers stressed the necessity of pinpointing the high need areas and siting provision conveniently within them. Indeed, the type of accommodation in which a family lives may affect attitude towards nursery provision. It is conceivable that the business of getting a pre-schooler ready to go out at a fixed time may become a chore and 'not worth the bother', particularly where education is not a high priority.

It is notable, for example, that in many areas, the disappearance of slums has been followed by the growth of high rise flats. In 1972 in Greater London, an estimated 50,000 or more people (including 3,000 children between one and five) were living in high rise flats. The Design Bulletin 14, "House Planning - a Guide to User Needs with a Check List" (H.M.S.O.

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*and a proportion are making a conscious decision not to do so.

1968) makes no reference to children's needs, particularly play space. By 1970 Local Government Design Bulletin No. 21, a Government commissioned survey, feared that attempts by mothers to keep small children quiet in flats were likely to impair normal personality development. Yet pressure on housing and land continues and more similar flats are being built (National Children's Bureau (1973).

The possibility that mothers and children in high rise flats are at a disadvantage is re-inforced by the findings of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Study, "Children in Flats" (1970), which showed what it can be like for a mother with young children living even a few flights up. They conclude: "in this country, under present conditions, the housing in flats of families with young children is restrictive, undesirable and productive in sum of a good deal of human discomfort if not suffering. There is a very positive indication of an effect on the child in his early years and there is a strong possibility of resultant behavioural difficulty in many instances." This conclusion is supported by Pearl Jephcott (1971) who in a study of 'Homes in High Flats' found that the pre-school aged child failed to develop a sense of security and that its curiosity was stultified.

One would imagine that mothers and children in such accommodation would benefit from the stimulus and friendship of a nursery class or playgroup. Some undoubtedly do. Others feel they cannot allow their child out to play because the ground and any safe areas are out of sight and hearing; they are constantly worried about the dangers of windows and balconies. "Any outside contacts are practically dependent on 'shopping expeditions'; children are isolated in their own homes, with striking lack of stimulation and opportunities for mixing with other children" (Maizels, J. 1961). In the frame of mind suggested by this description, particularly where there are younger children, it would be understandable if a mother felt the strain of humping pram or push chair up and down even one or two flights of stairs and coping with a fractious baby who needed to be bathed and fed, just to get a three year old to playgroup, by 9.30, was not worth the effort.

In new urban development, whether high rise flats or new town estates, stresses are aggravated where traditional support systems have broken down (Spencer, J. 1964). During the 10 years from 1961, prescriptions for drugs to alleviate emotional stress rose in England and Wales from about 32,000,000 to 48,000,000. Dennis Marsden, in a study of 'Mothers Alone' (1969), shows how emotional difficulties combine with low living standards to affect not only diet but aspirations for their children of mothers struggling to bring up a family on their own. They may become so vulnerable that a normal social

life becomes an ordeal. One particularly revealing point in the Inner London Study (p. 78) was that among the 35% who did not make use of any sort of pre-school provision, one parent families (where the mother was on social security and did not work) and young mothers without close family ties, predominated. It was also found that most mothers who did not make use of pre-school provision had left school at 15, feeling failures, and did not wish their children to start 'school' any sooner than the statutory age.

Another factor in the tendency to feel attendance is 'not worth the bother' could arise as a result of redevelopment, causing the removal of considerable sections of the population to new districts. This does not emerge as important in the Parfit Study, but in a small unpublished survey carried out in 1972 as part of a course for Senior Social Workers in the Southwark Community Project, it is a striking feature. This survey covered Save the Children Fund playgroups in Southwark and aimed to obtain the views of parents regarding the adequacy and appropriateness of the facilities (if used), together with any reasons for non-use.

The researchers aimed to interview 50 families, but 18 families in their sample had removed from the area or could not be found; this was not a case of a long time lag between initial contact and follow-up. The S.C.F. provided names and addresses of mothers and children who were regular users of the playgroup as well as those who had registered and only attended sporadically. Contact with mothers with children under five who did not use playgroup or nursery facilities was provided through local health visitors, or seeking out mothers in the streets, in shops, launderettes, etc. Letters were sent at the beginning of January, 1972, to all mothers except those in the last category and followed up within two weeks. Nevertheless 18 families had already moved and a further three were expecting to move. These researchers therefore found population mobility to be an important inhibiting factor in take-up of provision. Above average instability of the population is likely wherever there is housing re-development. In addition, as a result of some housing policies, for example those whereby families in two bedroomed accommodation are eligible for re-housing if they have two children of different sex, it is to be expected that the period of change occurs when the younger child is one year plus (the second child is often not 'counted' until one year of age) and the older one between three and four, i.e. nursery school age. In the upheaval of an impending move, regular attendance or even beginning some form of pre-schooling could be more than a mother could cope with.

In the period prior to moving, it is understandable that it might not be advisable to settle a child into one group, only to uproot

him in the near future. After a move, the period of adjustment can be a long one; new friends may have to be made and for many people this is a slow process - this may be the case especially in new towns and overspill 'communities'; the gap caused by removal from close family and friends is not always immediately compensated for by improved accommodation. Some newcomers may just not talk to their neighbours or feel like getting involved with local activities.

In such a situation, the usual 'grapevine' type of communication which is often relied on for passing information about pre-school provision cannot operate. But it is not only in mobile communities that communication seems to be a problem. One of the aims of the East Newcastle Action Group (see page 8) was to find out how well mothers had been informed about existing nursery opportunities. They discovered a "remarkable and apparently unnecessary lack of information". Schools confirmed that parents were expected to inform themselves through older children, neighbours, and welfare workers, except where substantial new provision was made: parents were then informed in writing. Although schools were confident that everyone knew of the existence of their classes through hearsay - only 38 out of 84 mothers, when asked to name a local state nursery, were able to do so; 95% of parents stated that they had received no written information about nursery schools. It seems likely that such information is mislaid, or misunderstood by parents (Red House Report No. 1, p.4).

Another small study was carried out by a group of mothers in Colchester ('Before School', 1967). They selected a random sample of 318 mothers by taking every twentieth name on the official list of families with children under five in the Borough of Colchester; of these, they succeeded in interviewing 161. One of their conclusions was that "many of the mothers interviewed did not fully understand the purpose of nursery groups, especially the pre-school playgroup kind". They recommended better publicity.

The Brent Campaign for the Under Fives, in a study of what 43 mothers, living in Kilburn, thought about play facilities for their pre-school children ('Fair Do's for all', 1972), found that one in five of the mothers had not heard of the existing provision. They concluded that ignorance kept demand at a low level. These findings cast doubt on the implied assumption of the White Paper that parents know what is available and where to find it.

There are, however, communities where lack of knowledge cannot be put forward as the reason for disregarding facilities. In the National Children's Bureau Study, for example, "possible users were alerted by local advertisement, the distribution of leaflets, personal canvassing and, in a few

cases, through the services of health visitors" (p. 14). Nevertheless, as has already been pointed out, the response in terms of those it was most hoped to reach, fell short of expectation. The Save the Children Fund supports many playgroups in areas of special need; supervisors go out of their way to publicise playgroups and to contact mothers, but often with disappointing results. It could be that in claiming ignorance of the facilities, mothers are masking other reasons for non-attendance.

Expense would seem to be one such likely factor in preventing mothers from making use of the provision. This is the view of many social workers, health visitors and playleaders. Where fees are high (25p or more a session), this is probably so. Nevertheless, in an 'Analysis of Housegroups' (unpublished report - Pre-School Playgroups Association, 1972), a nationwide survey, it appeared common practice for organisers to accept payment in whatever way suited the mother or to waive it altogether, but still "those who needed the playgroup most, did not come forward." In the National Children's Bureau study, most playgroups charged 5p a session; Save the Children Fund also make only a nominal charge of 5p or less. Yet, in spite of considerable individual efforts to do so, playgroups do not attract the mothers they most want. The survey of Save the Children Fund Playgroups in Southwark also failed to isolate expense as an inhibiting factor (p.11).

There is a further point that under the proposed scheme, expense, as an obstacle to use of provision, can only relate to playgroups; the White Paper makes it clear that nursery education will be free. It is therefore not a primary issue, although it is evident that there are serious anomalies in a system of pre-school education, when nursery schools and classes are free, but attendance at a day nursery can depend on a means test. In addition playgroups, which are an accepted and welcome form of provision under some authorities but not others, make a wide range of charges - from a nominal 5p or less to over 40p per session (P.P.A. figures for 1973).

Finally, the National Children's Bureau Study raises the question of the part played by parent-participation in attracting or discouraging use of facilities. Quite apart from working mothers who cannot normally become involved, it is sometimes felt that parents should not be asked to participate - simply that they should be offered the services of a first class nursery school or even that "mother participation and bringing a service to children in greatest need are incompatible goals" (Parfit and Joseph 1972). Others are increasingly aware of the value, whether in nursery school or playgroup, of involving parents. The White Paper certainly underlines the importance attached by the government to their role and "the lessons that can be learnt from the experience of play-

groups" (Para. 29). Elsewhere in the N.C.B. report, it was made clear that mother involved groups could work well; the importance of mother participation from the earliest planning stages was stressed (p. 25), Parfit and Joseph. It is clear that the importance or otherwise of parental involvement is a crucial issue in connection with nursery education and needs to be the subject of much closer study.

In the last analysis, whether any form of nursery provision reaches those in greatest need, given an 'on demand' policy, depends on the take up by parents. It is a commonly held view of teachers, playleaders and social workers that a significant proportion of those who do not bring their children to nursery class or playgroup are socially and educationally disadvantaged. Evidence from a number of sources, notably the National Children's Bureau Study of Southwark playgroups, strengthens the view that there is a small but important section of the population which does not avail itself of the facilities.

This then, is the problem which this exploratory study seeks to clarify. Given that in a community, there will be some who make use of pre-school provision and some who do not, are there any discernible differences between them or any indication of underlying factors in common? Do the reasons proffered, however cogent, mask a more fundamental difference between families who do not take part in pre-school provision and those who do?

CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER II

Meeting the need: some local solutions

In some areas, families which are not being reached and who are unlikely to be reached by provision 'on demand' have been identified. This has occurred in those places where steps have been taken on the basis of local initiative to 'meet the need'; almost always the facilities provided lie outside the bounds of statutory provision of nursery classes and schools. Initiative is often taken by people who respond spontaneously to a need; they see ways in which their abilities can be used in terms which are readily understandable and which often bring immediate and obvious satisfaction. They do not always have time and even patience to record and assess their work. Subjective evaluation goes on all the time and changes are made in the light of experience.

The findings of such innovators are often discounted on the grounds that they are anecdotal and incapable of replication. Nevertheless, in a study such as this, there is a place for 'case histories' which show, first of all, that a need exists which is not being met by the mere extension of nursery school places, and illustrate some characteristics of those who do not participate. In addition, more detailed accounts of approach, organisation and ethos of individual groups may suggest possible explanations of the varying degrees of success in achieving mother-involvement observed in the National Children's Bureau study.

It is possible to touch on only a few such projects, but it is hoped that, although not controlled experiments, they will provide valuable evidence as to how some individuals, authorities and voluntary bodies have recognised the need for flexibility in approach.

As has already been pointed out, one problem with Educational Priority Areas is that pockets of disadvantage may go unnoticed; or if not unnoticed, then without special financial help. Ascot is certainly not an area which would be associated in most people's minds with Educational Priority - rather with horse racing and middle class affluence. Nevertheless, some years ago, the Community Liaison Officer for Voluntary Workers there became aware of three categories of family with under fives who were under stress and needed special help. First there were the single-parent families living in an area where rents were high and often payable by the quarter. Such families often fell behind in payments and found themselves in difficulties. Secondly, there was a small number of wives of unemployed and those with serious family problems; finally, a group of women isolated in rural areas, often in tied accommodation.

The problem was not a large one, but it was real and persistent. It was realised that much as these mothers might benefit from pre-school provision for their children, they would never take the initiative; nor, with signs of their demoralisation apparent, would they have been easily integrated into established nursery groups. In these circumstances, it was decided to try to interest them in a centre for themselves combined with a playgroup for their children. In this

project, careful records of each family were kept.

Practical problems were considerable, especially with limited resources. Individual mothers were scattered without means of transport; they were characterised by lack of confidence and inability to make personal relationships - often shunned by their immediate neighbours because they were 'going down'. Nevertheless, premises were made available in an old building scheduled for re-development. Support was forthcoming from local voluntary bodies and schools; the Rotary Club, for example, organised free transport, mainly by private car; drivers took on a regular commitment and grew to know mothers and children very well. One unlooked-for development was that mothers found it easier to begin to talk on a car journey when there was no necessity for direct eye contact; they were often ashamed of their problems and found it very difficult to talk about them, however much they wanted to do so. The journey was found to give great strength to child, mother and helper. The same welcoming driver made for continuity between home and playgroup - both a refuge.

Long before this stage was reached, however, the initial contact had been made by social workers or health visitors. They would suggest to mothers that a playgroup was available and that transport could be arranged. This was often followed up by a visit from the Area Liaison Officer, who would chat informally about what went on in the playgroup and how much it was enjoyed once there. Although no money was involved, it was made clear when the family was introduced to the playgroup that there were ways in which mothers could contribute to the running of the group and that such help was needed. It was a group run by the mothers, that is, "All of us". This experience of belonging to, and being accepted into, a group totally dependent upon one for fund raising and continuance, was totally new to these families.

Indeed, this was basic to the whole scheme; a general characteristic of these mothers was that not only were they short of ready money, but they felt they had nothing else to offer. In order that they should not be subject to charity - unacceptable to them - it was therefore necessary to find some real contribution they could make.

This was not difficult. There were many jobs connected with the running of the group which required only time and a little effort. As mothers gained in confidence, they were more willing to accept responsibility. Fund raising events to provide equipment, jumble sales for example, were organised with enthusiasm. Friends were made in the relaxed atmosphere of the mother's room; here they could make a cup of tea, gather round a fire and chat.

The playgroup was in the adjoining room and mothers could come and go as they wished. The rather unprepossessing premises would compare

unfavourably with a normal nursery school, but their similarity to the relative chaos at home was an advantage; it made a gradual adjustment possible. The accommodation was not without character, however; being homely and not too immaculate, the children could explore in ways that would not be permitted in a more formal nursery school. There was plenty of space and no need to pack paint and easels, puzzles and prams away between sessions. The main playroom had once been a magistrate's court and was on several levels. The old jury box remained and was full of play possibilities. Best of all, there were several connecting rooms so that mothers and children could carry on a variety of activities without getting in each other's way.

A playgroup such as this is viewed as a 'Halfway House', fulfilling a role similar to a playbus, in that although its physical limitations make it far from the ideal solution, it can act as an initiator and a useful link between an isolated family and eventual integration into an established playgroup or nursery group. It has acted as a catalyst, in that mother and group activity has developed throughout the Rural District Area as a result of this experiment.

In the majority of families, it was not only the child who needed play. The family had needs of its own which could be met through the group. The children were indeed in need of stimulus, freedom of activity, often of a one-to-one relationship with a loving mother figure, together with the comfort and succour of a relaxed atmosphere. Siblings and mothers, too, and in some cases, other adults in the families, needed the group.

In holiday times or when crisis 'struck', young brothers and sisters were always welcome to come and play; proprietorial pride on the part of the initial playgroup attender and the other children was noticed. The sense of 'belonging' was much needed, particularly in single-parent families.

The success of the playgroup was in no small part due to the fact that it could cater for the mother as well as the child and at the same time. Many mothers could not face parting with a much needed baby, because they were 'alone' and lonely. The child, in many cases, represented their only claim to achievement.

Beyond this need of the mothers to be with the child, there is the need to gain practical help which the socially isolated woman does not receive in the normal neighbourly way. The group offered neighbourliness, but at a distance - swopping clothes, giving lifts for shopping, babysitting, and so on. The combination of this sharing of the practicalities of life (the fund raising jumble sales are integral to this) and the intangible 'belonging' has begun to develop the confidence these women lack.

The need of other adults in the family has also been served

by the rippling effect of the group activities. Jumble sales and outings, regular contact, meeting casually in the shops, all contribute to the breakdown of isolation and give the feeling of belonging to a local community.

The playgroup also successfully links people from different backgrounds - the mothers and the drivers, for example, may find that loneliness and feelings of isolation are shared experiences. In an area such as Ascot, it is not easy for women in the late 30's and 40's to find work that is sufficiently rewarding. There is a surplus of able, untrained middle-class women, often held back from further training by resistant husbands and families, whose sole work satisfaction can be gained by voluntary work. These are "middle-class do-gooders". Perhaps it could be argued that their needs are as great, but not as obvious, as the mothers of the playgroup children.

Both girls and boys from the local comprehensive school help on a regular basis, not only with the children in the playgroup, but also in the various fund raising activities. Preparation for their weekly visits as well as their experience with the group considerably widens their horizons. Community work in the sixth form has greatly developed through contact with the playgroup.

The organisation of a group such as this depends initially on the driving force of individuals who, aware of a need or problem, inspire others who can make practical contributions towards a solution. They work as a team together in an informal way, without the need for committee procedure. This rather haphazard approach has been found to be a definite asset when trying to interest mothers who are quickly overwhelmed by formal situations and unable to plan very far ahead.

The way in which a mother is first approached, and the way in which she is received is of paramount importance whether the organisation is small, as in Ascot, or on a larger scale as in Birmingham. Informality and willingness to listen at all times are therefore key factors too at a comparatively large pioneer family centre in a 'concrete jungle' of houses, maisonettes and blocks of high rise flats in Birmingham. Like the Ascot project, this scheme too aims to reach families unlikely to take initiative in seeking out available provision. In contrast to Ascot, however, co-operation was between the Social Services Department and the National Children's Home who first studied the area and concluded that the prior need was for a day care centre.

As a result of generous funding, the Family Centre, a National Children's Home and Methodist Church foundation, opened in November 1971; it is a comprehensive unit with three main departments. One section caters for babies up to 15 months; then there are two family rooms for 25 children from eighteen months to five years. The third section is a nursery classroom for three to five year olds. In addition, there is a medical department, an administrative unit, an

*Priority is given to children who are at risk by battering or physical neglect, and those severely lacking in stimulation. In addition, priority is also given to children from one parent families, or whose parents are themselves inadequate, or emotionally disturbed. A number of children are handicapped, either mentally or physically.

office for social workers and a reception area. The domestic department has a well equipped kitchen and supplies 100 meals a day. There is also a launderette. Such a Centre facilitates co-operation between services. The Headmistress of the nursery school acts as educational adviser; and in addition to the resident social workers, the services of a doctor, educational psychologist, speech therapist and teacher of the deaf are involved.

Facilities then are admirable; but the problem is still the same - how to reach the families in most need? As in Ascot, there seem to be two key factors - provision of free transport and the informal friendliness of a team of people working closely together and ready to meet the demand for endless personal contact and the needs of the family as a whole - the overcompensation which seems necessary to begin the momentum of involvement. This is time-consuming and cannot be afforded by statutory agencies.

The Centre's day begins with a collection service at 7.15 a.m. and an hour later, there are already 35 children at the Centre. Officially open at 7.30, the Centre can cater for 74 pre-school children, of which 50 are placements from the Social Services Department. The children are given baths and medical attention; then comes breakfast - meals play an important part in the programme, as not only are there cases of under-nourishment and feeding problems, but meal-times also provide an opportunity for making friends and good relationships. Children go home at 6.00 and there are no residential arrangements; nevertheless, parents are welcome at any time. Sometimes mothers and even whole families spend the day at the Centre - parents then become temporary "members of staff". There are also regular group meetings and evening activities - P.T., films, dress-making and weekly hairdressing; practical discussions on budgeting, basic cookery, etc., are popular and bring the whole family together.

With all these activities and the wide range of facilities, the Centre is able to provide a social, emotional and educational base for parents and children. Although they live within an Inner City Ring, their situation is not so very different from the families in Ascot; they have the same problems of loneliness, unemployment and stresses with which they can barely cope. They share too the need for self-respect and the feeling that they have something to contribute. In Ascot, the mother's contribution was personal and practical; in Birmingham, approximately 80% pay something towards the service as it is considered that to give even 50p promotes moral responsibility.

In both these examples, at Ascot and in Birmingham, the specific need was apparent to those who studied the areas. In both cases, provision of facilities resulted in a sufficient number of families making use of them to justify the outlay in terms of time, energy and money. This was partly due to the

degree of co-operation between social workers, health visitors and playgroup or nursery school staff.

But health visitors and social workers have very heavy case loads and frequently have to concentrate on only the most difficult and intransigent cases. Is the need of those who are not necessarily known to either of these two bodies as easily identified and met? Can one even assume that what is seen as a need by an observer is necessarily felt as a need by the mothers concerned?

Some insight into the situation with mothers who are not known to social workers is afforded by a study carried out by the Inner London Playgroups Association. A peripatetic supervisor was appointed to set up and monitor the growth of a playgroup in Lambeth when accommodation became available in what appeared to be a needy area (1972). It comprised approximately a square mile of five storey flats, a few streets of three and four storey houses, few amenities and no open spaces. It was estimated that there were roughly three hundred under fives in this district. One nursery school catered for thirty children in the morning and thirty in the afternoon; three playgroups could take up to forty children between them.

The supervisor had had considerable success in starting playgroups in other similar districts. In May, 1972, she began in her usual way by knocking on doors to let mothers know there was a hall available for a playgroup and that if they were interested, they were welcome any Tuesday afternoon to talk about it. (Previous experience with other mothers had suggested that this type of informal approach was more likely to attract mothers than one meeting at a particular time.) She waited for them fairly confidently, as she had been well received and mothers had expressed enthusiastic interest. On previous occasions, a similar response would have led to a nucleus willing to start a playgroup.

Mothers did not come. Nevertheless, she continued to make contact with them in their homes and 100 informal interviews were completed. Mothers had apparently spoken freely on all aspects of their living conditions, their attitudes to their children, education and the future - once they knew and trusted her.

Interviewing in depth, though physically and mentally exhausting, was not rewarding. Although welcomed in the homes and taken into the confidence of many mothers, there was no real interest in a playgroup or any other type of pre-school education. As more insight was gained into the families and neighbourhood, the would-be supervisor realised that the situation of some of these mothers was such that they did not recognise their children's needs. Their own preoccupations

got in the way. Most of the mothers were young (22). They had left school as early as possible, not always through dislike of it, but because it was the accepted thing and they felt no encouragement was received from home or school to stay on. Marriage was the next "stage". Many girls were pregnant when they married and quickly had a second baby. Once married, it was accepted that husbands took responsibility for any social life, attitudes to children, education and money matters. Flats afforded little privacy; yet many of them felt isolated. They were bored, depressed and found difficulty in coping, although their situation was not thought to warrant help from social workers. It was simply that the transition from teenage schoolgirl or young wage earner to mother and wife was one for which they were ill-prepared.

The supervisor decided that the problem had been tackled in the wrong way. She started door knocking again, but this time with the mothers in mind and not the children. This new approach bore fruit. One Tuesday afternoon in mid-October, nine mothers and twelve children came to the first meeting of the 'Mother's Club'. They decided to take turns in looking after the children and agreed they wanted people to come and talk to them rather than have a 'nattering club'. They were interested in first aid, dressmaking, cuts of meat and fish, other people's jobs, puppet making and Christmas decorations - that is, nothing to do with children. Subsequent attendance fluctuated between six and sixteen, but the nucleus remained, meeting on two afternoons a week.

Problems naturally arose from the arrangements made to care for the children. After a few weeks, a highly thought-provoking outing was arranged to Wandsworth, to visit an established playgroup where there was full parental involvement - that is, parents were responsible for administration, finance and supervision. The visitors had an opportunity of talking to mothers in the playgroup; this led to lively comment and discussion. The provision of interesting play equipment did not go unnoticed; indeed the stimulus of a visit to a good playgroup did more to set these mothers thinking than any amount of talking had done. At first, they were overwhelmed and felt that the gap between what they had to offer and what they had observed was so great that it was unbridgeable.

This was the moment when the idea of a playgroup could begin to grow; their horizons had been extended to include the germ of an idea of something desirable for them and their children. Long-term, caring, sensitive support for both mothers and children was needed. After much discussion, various fund-raising activities were suggested - jumble sales and a dance - and these were enthusiastically supported. A supervisor was appointed; playgroup and mothers' meetings functioned in adjoining rooms.

Inevitably there were problems. Some personalities were difficult. The level of equipment and educational expertise, when judged by

professional nursery standards, was low. Nevertheless, without the groundwork put in by the supervisor and her ability to put aside pre-conceived ideas, there would have been no recognition of the barriers preventing these mothers from making use of facilities. Their life-style - if judged only by the time they got up in the morning - was not geared to standard hours for pre-schooling, and with provision 'on demand' their children would have remained outside the system altogether because they did not recognise its relevance to their needs.

The importance of 'researching' an area first and assessing local needs is frequently stressed. (The White Paper: para. 22, "the Government hopes that local plans will reflect local needs and resources": Educational Priority, vol. 1, p. 106, "... The design of a pre-school programme must be preceded by diagnosis of the specific needs of the children for which the programme is designed.") What emerges from the experience in one small area of Inner London suggests that it may be constructive to consider the needs of mothers too. Meeting them where they are and supporting them in activities perhaps far removed from pre-schooling may enable them to reach a stage where they can respond to needs in their children of which they have hitherto been unaware.

Unfortunately, this is a long process and the dynamics of it are not fully understood; those who are aware of the educational advantages of the nursery school for the children, feel that time is too short to concentrate on the mothers, particularly when many teachers have developed skills for dealing with young children and not young adults who often come from very different backgrounds from their own. Experience in Ascot, Birmingham and Lambeth suggests the need to start long before nursery school age. Preparation for mother 'involvement' may start in the school, the ante- and post-natal period, through one o'clock clubs, mother and baby clubs or, in some areas, possibly home visiting. In the present situation, however, where the provision of nursery schools and classes still does not meet the need of parents who 'demand' the facility, the real issue is blurred. Staff have enough to do coping with full classes and exploring ways of involving parents who have been among the first to come forward and make use of the facilities. Long waiting lists give the impression of further considerable demand. Such evidence can be misleading, however, as when places are hard to come by, many parents put their names down on several lists.

The issue, however, is not with the need for adequate nursery provision, but rather with the extent to which it will be used by the whole community. Given that there will be a small proportion who need very definite supportive help from social workers and playleaders and a large proportion who will want their children to benefit from pre-school education, how great is the proportion of people between the two who, for a variety of reasons, may hesitate?

What kinds of approach will tip the balance in favour of their participation?

It is in this connection that the history of the established group in Wandsworth which was visited by the Lambeth mothers is interesting. It charts the development of what appeared to be an unpromising and inopportune undertaking.

A new tenant on a Council estate had been horrified at women fighting in the courtyard and had been unwilling to let her children play there. She found other mothers who shared her feelings and went to a Tenants' Association meeting to air them. She happened to sit next to the deaconness from a local church who suggested a playgroup might help and advised her who to contact.

This mother knew nothing about playgroups; she and the other mothers contacted both 'Save the Children Fund' and the Pre-School Playgroups Association. The former advised against starting their own group on the very understandable grounds that they had no professional qualifications and it would be very much less expensive to let S.C.F. run one.

P.P.A. sent down a local mother who gave them the basic information and help they needed to start. They opened in a Church Hall that was soon pulled down; for some time they even met in a garage but finally came to an arrangement with a local church whereby they share a hall with a Montessori school.

This was the genesis of the group which so impressed the mothers from Lambeth; it is a group which, now five years old, impresses professionals as well, with its equipment (at least £400 a year is raised through fund raising activities which involve the whole family) and the expertise with which it is used. It required vision, resourcefulness and determination to achieve the standards set by this group as well as considerable help from statutory bodies. The qualities of resourcefulness and determination were constant, but the vision changed as horizons widened.

It was perhaps significant that these mothers had been offered the possibility of a playgroup organised by professionals and had rejected it. This seems to imply that these non-middle class mothers did not wish to hand over their children to outsiders. The supervisor employed by the mothers belonged to the same community. They appreciated her concern for their children and gave her their support and co-operation . Over a period, through helping at 'their' playgroup, many began to see their children's play in a new light. Some who began by simply wanting to get rid of their children subsequently enjoyed their own children and others more than they would have thought possible. New friends were made and added impetus given by attending training courses.

This group is not unique in the area; other similar ones share a strong community feeling and support each other - financially and in other practical ways. For these mothers, the need was met by involvement, but it was a

very gradual process which is still evolving. Had they been faced in the beginning with the responsibilities they now assume with confidence, they would have been overwhelmed, as were the mothers from Lambeth. They feel that it was the very fact of 'learning by doing' that helped to bring about their success. (As one mother said, "People are constantly underestimating us because we live in a deprived area. I know now that I haven't enriched my own children's vocabulary, because I didn't know about talking to them - I and a lot of people like me are willing and able to do it, once we are given the idea.")

The special quality of these playgroups is emphasised by Dr. Margaret Pollak's suggestion that "working class parents in particular have been persuaded to abdicate educational responsibilities in favour of the institution." She reported that the majority of mothers in a sample in an industrial area of North East Derbyshire, professed a complete lack of belief that they themselves possessed any skill or knowledge that might enhance their children's cognitive skill and intellectual development (The Times Educational Supplement, 16.2.1973, and quoted by Lady Plowden at the Annual Conference of the Pre-school Playgroups Association in Edinburgh, 1973). These conclusions are not confirmed by the experience in Wandsworth.

There is clear evidence, however, that the home is the strongest single factor in relation to educational achievement (Plowden 1967); furthermore, programmes which include the mother and are community based are more likely to be successful (Cicirelli,1969; Halsey,1972; Midwinter,1972). The Report on the Red House (1972) claimed that "with intelligent guidance most parents can acquire sufficient practical knowledge of child development to act as efficient educators... there is also evidence that membership of a highly motivated group raises the morale of parents and helps to break the cycle of low aspiration and low educational attainment which has been suggested by various research reports."

It is therefore important to identify any factors which may contribute to participation of such a kind. There is perhaps a clue in the National Children's Bureau Report (1972) which showed that there were clear distinctions in the manner in which playgroups were initiated, organised and staffed. It suggested that attitudes to mothers - "whether they are seen as partners or as people for whom a service is provided" - determined responses. It seemed that a range of attitudes existed. At one extreme, they were inclined to be paternalistic; initiation was often by a vicar, church worker or someone who assumed personal responsibility for the administration of the group. Progress was achieved with minimum of delay; the group ran efficiently, probably with trained staff, some with and others without 'parent participation' (p. 17). At the other extreme a group of mothers coming together on an equal footing to organise a playgroup, was more likely

to experience difficulty in establishing procedures, making relationships and in communication, with consequent delays and setbacks (p. 18). It was noted that fewer mothers in high need areas participated and it was therefore suggested that non-participant groups might be more suitable in this situation.

Mothers in the Wandsworth groups doubted this. 'Initiators' accepted that progress in the early stages was often slow, that mistakes were made and time wasted in discussion. They maintained however that the entire group learned from their experience, since they were all involved and took responsibility. This would not, they thought, have been so likely to happen if an individual had assumed personal respnsibility. Although, in the early days, children had the disadvantage of poor equipment, indifferent premises and untrained staff, they benefitted from emotional security and a high ratio of adults to children. Many of these shortcomings could have been overcome by the 'right kind of help'. The type of help that was most appreciated was non-authoritarian and non-directive; it was that which gave practical advice, information and support but which did not try to manipulate or to take away initiative. If the way advice was given led to a sense of purpose, enjoyment and achievement, it helped to build up confidence that had been eroded by an education that had produced a sense of failure.

In the long term, once insights gained from mothers' group meetings and training courses began to percolate, considerable changes were noted. These were mainly in the way mothers talked to their children, responded to behavioural problems, chose toys and equipment and in the general degree of sociability, confidence and interest in education and child development evinced. Above all, it was claimed that these changes affected not only the 'initiators' and those who wanted to be involved, but also those who, at first, would happily have "abdicated educational responsibilities". Such changes, moreover, operated not only while the playgroup was in session, but were felt to influence the whole family.

This is a very different conclusion from that of Mrs. Monica Else who studied the extent of supportive relationships generated by playgroups (unpublished thesis, University of Sussex, 1969). She interviewed mothers at three urban playgroups located in different types of housing area (N = 114). She found that playgroups tended to reinforce "existing patterns of social relations in the community"; that is, those who already felt at ease in formal and social situations were likely to derive most benefit, while those who already had difficulty in finding the informal support they needed, were prevented by these same difficulties from becoming involved with the playgroup.

It is hardly surprising that in a cross section of mothers,

the more articulate and confident would be willing to 'take office' - if only because they were more familiar with procedure and felt able to cope with the situation. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that since they were willing and able to take responsibility, those less confident would not become involved. What was needed, according to the Wandsworth mothers, was a climate in which all mothers are needed and in which they can gain confidence and a sense of belonging. This is an opinion very similar to those concerned with the Ascot experiment. Although it was accepted that there were some mothers who could not participate, it was thought that there were many others who initially did not wish to do so because they felt inadequate and lacked confidence; the mere idea of committees and committee procedures was enough to deter such mothers. Fatigue, ill-health, stress of all kinds was felt to militate against involvement; yet, in retrospect, the experience of mothers in the Wandsworth group would testify to the view that, expected to take an interest, helped to understand and cope with their children better, together with the kind of support received from other mothers and supervisors, this type of 'involvement' has had a profoundly beneficial effect on their lives.

The consensus of opinion of staff and mothers in these case studies was that it is not so much a question of structure or organisation, but of the basic attitudes within that organisation. Initiators can be mothers, church workers, P.P.A., or statutory bodies; success in involving those who would not normally participate depends on the attitudes within the groups. An amalgam of statutory/voluntary provision may in some projects offer the best type of help; the voluntary workers tempering bureaucracy by their warmth and spontaneous caring. Parent expectation, the way in which horizons are gradually extended and the degree to which parents are supported, their initiative encouraged and their confidence increased, are the crucial factors. The role of the supervisor is seen as reaching out through the children to the parents and the community.

Such an approach is often unacceptable to the trained nursery teacher, whose special skills lie in creating a stimulating and educative environment for the young child; they do not usually extend this activity to mothers. Many schools welcome parents and try to improve home-school relations, but the onus is on parents to respond. Although some parents do help in the classroom, they are likely to be those who already have some training or natural interest and ability. Teachers "welcome parental support and are prepared to put their training and experience at the disposal of parents," according to the Report of the National Union of Teachers (Provision for Pre-school Education, 1974). Teachers see their role as primarily concerned with the social education of the young and preparation

for school; while they seek to develop a good relationship between school and home, they expect to establish this link through friendly relationships and a welcoming school atmosphere. Yet it is made clear in the Study of Nursery Education, Schools Council Working Paper 41, 1972, that attitudes are basically authoritarian and child-centred.

But if, as these case studies suggest, parental participation of at least a proportion of the 'disadvantaged' is not just the corollary of generally friendly attitudes, but entails a fundamental difference in approach and role concept, then 'parental' participation' will mean, either a change in attitude, or involvement only for those parents who already have the confidence and status to cope with a 'school' atmosphere; those who feel they have nothing to contribute will withdraw from the situation. Excuses for non-participation may be given which simply mask the real reasons; these are related to lack of confidence rather than ability, to feelings of hopelessness and alienation.

Of course, case studies provide no more than interesting examples of individual experience; one cannot generalise from them. On the other hand, if the fundamental difference in attitude between the teacher-child orientated nursery school and the community or parent orientated playgroup is shown to have some relevance in the literature and related studies, then it may be important to pursue this line of thought.

CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

Survey of the literature and related studies

The literature of the pre-school years is dominated by studies of child development which document the importance of formative influences during this comparatively short but critical period of life, but provide no systematic account of the nature and interaction of these influences. It has been argued that the development of intellectual ability is concentrated in the early years: by the age of four, the individual has developed 50% of his mature intelligence and by the time he starts school at the statutory age of five, the major part of his intelligence potential is accounted for (Bloom 1964). The degree of irreversibility implied in these findings has been questioned (Schaefer 1970), but not the importance of the early years in normal cognitive growth.

Parallel with this is the knowledge of the extraordinary rate of development of skills in the young child (Brunar, 1969). Yet considerable differences emerge as to how these should be fostered, depending largely on whether or not one takes a maturational view of development. Similarly, both cultural and environmental effects have been widely observed (Mead 1930, 1964; Newson and Newson 1963; Davie R., Butler N., Goldstein H. 1972), but there is only fragmented understanding of how these operate.

By virtue of coming first, these early years set in motion a train of events that are the basis for later development. Yet there are few longitudinal studies which have progressed far enough to show the long range effect of different strategies. One of the most interesting and controversial is that of Skeels and Dye (1939) and the follow-up, which spans some 20 years (Skeels H. M. 1966).

The original experiment concerned two groups of children from an orphanage. One group of 13 three years olds with a mean I.Q. of 64 were transferred from that environment where they had been cared for by a number of women to an institution for the mentally retarded where they were looked after by some of the younger women inmates. These women were responsible for individual children and 'mothered' them; in addition to the increased attention and affection from their mother substitutes, all the children attended a nursery school and had access to an outside playground. The second group comprised 12 children who were considered normal in mental development and who remained at the orphanage; their mean I.Q. was 86.7.

After 19 months, children in the experimental group showed a gain in I.Q. ranging from 7 - 58 points (a net average gain of 27.5 I.Q. points); in contrast, after 21 months the group still at the orphanage revealed a loss in

I.Q. points of between 8 - 45 points - averaging 27.2 points.

The striking feature of this study is that the children were followed up as adults 20 years later. Skeels then found that the mean grade completed by the experimental group was 12.8 whereas in the second group only one child had an education beyond the eighth grade - most reached only third grade. 11 out of the 13 had married and between them had 28 children with a mean I.Q. of 103.9. None of these children was considered abnormal. All the members of the first group were self-supporting, in occupations ranging from professional and semi-professional to semi-skilled labourer and domestic. In the other group one had died in adolescence, four were still in institutions; only two had married and one of these had divorced. Half this group were unemployed and the rest, with one exception, unskilled labourers.

The substantial disparity between the groups has given rise to a number of different interpretations and considerable controversy. The experiment will serve as a base for the discussion.

Correspondence in 'The Times' following the publication of the White Paper and views appearing in 'The Observer' (Sunday, 9th December, 1972) which expressed strong opinions against nursery education, derive from one interpretation. It was stated, for example, that the "most important thing in a child's life is its attachment to its mother" and that "children deprived of a complete first relationship are more likely to become adults who are less stable, less able to make satisfying relationships of their own, more neurotic, more prone to illness and finally, make worse parents themselves." Nursery education was seen as continuing a "cycle of deprivation".

Many highly structured programmes of compensatory education turn upon another interpretation which lays stress on the part played by increased stimuli in the improvement shown by the children in the experimental group. These two possible explanations will be examined in greater detail, leaving aside the third main alternative view that the observed differences can be accounted for in terms of heredity and the phenomena of regression to the mean.

Care of the children in the experimental group reported by Skeels included both warm, affectionate consistent concern from one person of low intelligence and the added stimulus of the nursery school. A view that has been argued by Casler (1961; 1968) is that it is the range of stimuli offered the child which is of paramount importance; although the mother is frequently the intermediary in such experiences, she is not indispensable in this capacity. It has been reported, for example, that babies stop crying when automatically rocked at 60 cycles a minute; rocking at 50 cycles was ineffective, while a few

babies required rocking at seventy cycles a minute. (Ambrose 1969, p. 104)

Early animal studies (Hebb 1949) first drew attention to differences observed between rats reared in the restrictive and unvaried environment of cages with others brought up as pets with diverse sources of stimulation. Early stimulus deprivation has since been shown to result in poor cognitive development in cats, rats and monkeys (Bronfenbrenner 1968; Riesen 1965; Hein and Held 1967). Subsequent experiments (Denenberg 1969) suggest that handling rats between birth and weaning has long term effects at the level of physiological and biochemical processes and that the later stimulus of an enriched environment affects perceptual and cognitive behaviour (Levine 1969), (David and Appell 1969).

Lack of adequate stimulation in institutions is associated with poor cognitive development - lack of toys and play opportunities retard motor skills (Dennis 1960). Other studies have underlined specific areas in which stimulus can have marked effect. A series of experiments reported by Rutter (1972) demonstrate that diversity in stimulus and the extent to which the subject takes an exploratory role has a strong bearing on intellectual development. Some evidence suggests that specific experience is related to specific skills. A chimpanzee reared with its arms and legs in cardboard cylinders resulted in underdevelopment of motor co-ordination and spatial orientation but had no effect on visual discrimination (Nissen, Chow and Semmes, 1951). Replication of the experiment with humans is not feasible, but results of the highly structured programme of Bereiter and Engelmann at the Academic School, Champaign, Illinois, point in the same direction, namely, that specific skills require specific stimuli. In this programme, two groups of children of unskilled or semi-skilled workers were compared. The control group had two years of traditional pre-school education while the experimental group had intensive teaching in language, arithmetic and reading with emphasis in rapidity of learning. The experimental group gained 17.4 I.Q. points after the first year and 8.6 after the second. The control group gained only 8.07 in the first year and lost 2.96 of those after the second year (American Institute for Research in Behavioural Sciences, Palo Alto 1970).

Demonstration that cognitive changes can be brought about by appropriate stimulation, together with evidence that supports the view that early deprivation can be reversed - e.g. the Skeels experiment itself - encourages the view that highly structured, professionally administered enrichment programmes of comparatively short duration can 'compensate' for inadequacies in the home environment.

A different point of view, which does not negate the importance of adequate stimulation, nevertheless emphasises the central role of the mother.

In reviewing the effects of maternal deprivation for the World Health Organisation, Ainsworth (1962) concluded that it was lack of sufficient "intimate personal interaction" which was the chief factor in any deprivation in institutions. As in the more mechanistic interpretation of Casler, much supporting evidence comes from animal studies. A series of experiments with young monkeys has shown that, offered the choice, they will seek the comfort of a cloth model mother, even though it does not lactate, rather than a lactating wire one (Harlow and Zimmermann 1959). Another of Harlow's studies was concerned with the effects of early isolation. One group of monkeys was reared in total isolation and was considerably impaired; the control group was reared in 'partial isolation' which meant that they could see and hear people and other monkeys, but during their early months they had no close interaction with them. This group is of greater interest as the condition approximates more closely to that of children deprived of intimate interaction with others. These monkeys were followed up and it was found that there was considerable impairment of normal maternal behaviour. Severe emotional disturbance resulted which was related to the length of time they had been isolated (H. Cross and H. Harlow, 1965).

In humans, a comparison was made between a group of babies in hospital, who were comparatively isolated, with another group in a baby home where they received more 'mothering'. The former group was slower to form attachments on return home (Schaffer 1963).

The importance of 'attachment' was central to the argument put forward against nursery education (see page 2). Numerous studies of birds and animals (Lorenz 1935; Harlow 1961) have shown that there seem to be particularly sensitive periods when the young attach themselves to a 'mother' figure, and that that attachment is vital for subsequent healthy development. This process of 'imprinting' is seen in humans as the bond or attachment which develops between a young child and its mother, usually at about six months (Schaeffer and Emerson 1964) or within the first two years (Tizard and Tizard, 1972). One theory is that children attach themselves to one person - monotropy (Bowlby 1969) - and that this bond is different from all other relationships (Bower 1966).

Bowlby and Ainsworth stress the overwhelming importance of the mother in behaviour attachment. A recent reassessment of maternal deprivation (Rutter 1972) shows, not a reversal of these views, that is, the preponderant importance of early relationships for later development, but a definite shift away from a view which restricts bonding to the mother. Rutter also draws a distinction between failure to form bonds, which 'may result in affectionless psychopathy' and disruption of bonds, which may lead to distress. Disruption and separation are not synonymous.

There is a gradual and natural growth in independence in the child from three years upwards. Dr. Bowlby ('Attachment' vol. 1, p. 206) puts it this way:

> "Although most children after their third birthday show behaviour attachment less urgently and frequently than before, it nonetheless constitutes a major part of behaviour."

The significance of bonding for future development is not in question, but since attachment is normally effected by six months and by the age of three is assuming diminishing importance, the interpretation of it in the maternal role for children of nursery school age implicit in the 'Observer' article referred to on page 2 is not supported by the evidence.

It is found, however, that the quality and intensity of the relationship between the child and the mother or person with whom the child feels the bond is of fundamental importance (Rutter 1972). Studies of children in hospital, for example, have not shown distress to be a universal syndrome; it appears to be less pronounced if the adult/child relationship has been a good one hitherto (Vernon et al. 1965). Research in animal behaviour supports this. Observations of macaques monkeys (Kaufmann and Rosenblum 1969) show that different species respond dissimilarly to separation from their mothers; those who are normally less dependent on them and who appear to have more social play, show less distress. A longitudinal study of monkeys (Hinde and Spencer Booth 1970) indicated that those monkeys manifesting greatest disturbance following separation from their mothers were those who had most frequently experienced rejection and lack of interest by their mothers; that is, it is the type of mother-child relationship prior to separation which is the operative factor in the child's response to separation. Ethological studies (ed. Blurton-Jones 1972, p. 269, Gill M. Leach) suggest that the child who is most distressed at separation is the one who is less responsive both to other children and to his mother. Neither relationship is rewarding for him and there is very little interaction. Regarding the Skeels study, it would be hypothesised that the orphaned children had formed sufficiently stable and satisfying relationships with their substitute mothers to be able to accept the separation imposed by attendance at a nursery school and the further separation caused by transfer to adoptive homes and still make stable relationships in later life.

There remains the question of the effect of day care on the bond. In 1951, the World Health Organisation Expert Committee on Mental Health stated that the use of day nurseries and crèches, which included children under three, resulted in permanent damage because of the effects early separation has on the bond. Subsequent research does not support this assertion either.

Anthropological studies (Mead 1954, 1962; Benedict 1935) cast doubt on the biological origin of the bond; they offer evidence that its nature or at least manifestation depends rather on the social setting. Further evidence accrues from studies of Israeli Kibbutzim (Smilansky, 1967). In these collective communities, parents both work during the day, they eat collectively, decisions are taken collectively and the children are cared for collectively in their own "houses" from babyhood by nurses and teachers. They see their parents regularly, but for comparatively short periods. The fact that these periods are brief and spaced serves to highlight the importance attached to them by both parents and children, and they do not prevent formation of close relationships or result in damage to the children. It appears that it is the parents who are more apt to find the separation intolerable (Bettelheim, 1969).

In Russia, too, Bronfenbrenner (1972) has indicated that many children are brought up from the first year of life in a collective setting. In the U.S.S.R., 48% of 'age-eligible' women work; as a result, the nurseries which cater for the children of these women aim to provide all the necessary physical, psychological and social conditions from the age of three months. In the first stage, babies are put in playpens which are raised off the ground so that staff are face to face with their charges. There are six or eight infants in each playpen and one 'upbringer' to four children. The task of the upbringer is to provide the child with every stimulus needed to develop skills - sensory, motor, linguistic and cognitive. She is encouraged to express her affection for the children in the way she speaks and acts. Older children of both sexes also take an active part in child rearing, so there is considerable diffusion of responsibility for child care. Parents share in the education of the child, but there is partial separation of the mother and child from a very early age.

Studies of working mothers do not suggest that their children are likely to show behavioural disorders or suffer from having more than one mother figure, provided they receive warm, consistent care from each (Douglas, Ross and Simpson 1968; Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore 1970; Lyle 1960; Denis 1960). Evidence submitted at the joint hearing before the sub-committee on Children and Youth, and the committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate 92nd. Congress, by Bettye M. Caldwell, p. 31, referred to investigations of the Syracuse group (Caldwell, Wright and Horing and Tannenbaim 1970) into the attachment of children to their own mothers and the reciprocal attachment of mothers to their children. Findings were reassuring concerning both breadth and strength of attachment. The same series of studies also found that young children in day care do not necessarily become disturbed emotionally, that they develop a feeling of community and, contrary to earlier findings, that they can be kept healthy.

Yudkin and Holme (1963) sum up the situation in the following way:

> "though they may be inconclusive, they (the findings) provide no support for the wilder statements about serious psychological trauma to children or to the production of a generation of juvenile delinquents. But neither do they provide us with grounds for complacency. The quality of the supervision is what counts."

American studies also fail to support the view that children of working mothers are adversely affected (Perry 1961; Burchinal and Rossman 1961). Here too it is the quality of the care that emerges as the crucial variable and the quality of the relationship within the family or institution (McCord and McCord 1959; Rutter 1971).

It would therefore appear that the fact that the 'mothers' in the Skeels experiment spent much of their time with their children, playing with them, talking and helping them was an important factor in the dramatic improvements recorded.

To summarize: studies of animals and infants show the importance of early attachment between mother or mother-substitute and the child. There is some disagreement as to whether the origin of the bond is cultural or biological but a consensus that the intensity and quality of early relationships is vital.

One view of development sees it as a series of steps promoted by appropriate stimuli or strategies which can work comparatively independently of the child's background. Another takes into account the effect of culture, social conditions and life-style since it emphasises the mother's central role and considers her interaction with the child as crucial.

In our society, the mother is in a unique position for influencing her child's development. The interactions of each mother-child pair can be seen as organised into patterns of consistent behaviour, "a dynamic organising force in the personality development of the child." (David and Appell 1966, 1967) In one study, these researchers visited mothers and children in their homes, each visit averaging three hours; there was a further visit to the office by the mother and the child when there was free play, testing and a short separation of the child from the mother. During this period of 'field work', interaction was recorded according to amount, initiation and termination, form, modes and tone. They conclude:

> "It (i.e. the study) clearly shows that all the areas of the child's personality are deeply influenced by the child's interactions with his mother. Although mothers are not aware of it, each one of them makes consistent and significant, conscious and unconscious, choices as to how she interacts with her child. Her selection depends on whether the behaviour he shows during the interaction arouses in her pleasure, indifference, displeasure, or anxiety."

Some mothers, however, appear more successful in promoting and sustaining a satisfactory mother/child relationship; one resulting in a happy adjustment to life inside and outside the family, the ability to make friends and to develop cognitive, linguistic and social skills necessary in school and adult life. Some mothers - and children- are predominantly successful in some spheres and not in others. Explanations for this are commonly based on class or cultural background. In a recent study of 'Three Year Olds in London', (Pollack 1972) a subjective impression of a doctor in general practice that children of immigrant West Indian parents were noticeably deficient in speech and language attainment and that their general performance was lower than indigenous children prompted a carefully designed investigation. Exhaustive interviews, examination and tests of three groups of children were carried out; there were 75 English children, 75 West Indian and 13 who could not be placed in either of the first two categories and reflected the cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhood, in a mixed control group reflecting the cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhood. Dr. Pollack found statistically significant differences in the tests of speech and language and also in tests of adaptive and personal behaviour between the groups in the direction she had hypothesised. She considered and rejected the possible genetic and biological explanations and concluded that "the average West Indian group child was suffering from two kinds of deprivation: i) maternal deprivation, ii) environmental deprivation, in the sense of a lack of environmental stimuli caused by living in inadequate housing conditions." Dr. Pollack explained maternal deprivation in this context by remarking that although the West Indian child was in contact with plenty of adults, he lacked the stimulating mother figure with whom he could identify:

> "No one person would find time to play with him, cuddle him, put him to bed, buy toys for his birthday (or even remember when it was), take him out or just sit and read him a bed-time story. There was no time to explain things to him."

Such research adds to the already substantial body of evidence which suggests that certain sections of the population concentrated among the lower working class and within certain geographical areas, are at an educational disadvantage (Plowden Report: Children and their Primary Schools, 1967)..

There is dramatic evidence that working class children are less successful in developing certain cognitive skills than middle class children (Douglas 1964; Davie, Butler and Goldstein, 1972). This is not to say that they are incapable of doing so (Heider, Cazden and Brown 1968; Lawton 1968). When seven to eight hours preparation were given in which a friendly atmosphere was established, differences between the performances of working class and middle

class children were minimal (Palmer 1968). There is no evidence to suggest that working class children lack a rich culture or the ability to make relationships or are unable to adjust happily within their family and community.

One of the most powerful tools for cognitive development is certainly linguistic skill. In a series of papers (1962, 1965, 1970) Bernstein has shown how different socio-economic groups tend to use distinct 'codes'. Middle class children learn, in natural interaction with their mothers, an 'elaborated' code, which is a more adept tool for use in developing abstract ideas, broadening horizons and eventual achievement in a society which increasingly depends on literate, skilled adults.

Lower working class families tend to use a more restricted code which depends, to a greater extent, on gesture and intonation to convey meaning, rather than complex verbal structures. While this may be quite adequate for communication within the family and immediate social group, a restricted code limits expression of abstract thought, sequential ideas and militates against success in an educational system which is geared to an 'elaborated' code.

Further evidence associating socio-economic background with the style of maternal behaviour towards her child (Hess and Shipman 1962) showed that certain patterns of mother/child interaction are as predictive of the child's cognitive behaviour as either I.Q. or social class, or even more so. The researchers conducted a series of tests on working class and middle class mothers in which they investigated the differences in the way they 'taught' certain skills; for example, the mother was asked as part of a collaborative effort with her child, to reproduce five simple sketches, which were continuously displayed, on an Etch-a-Sketch screen. This is a simple portable screen with two control knobs, one produces vertical lines and the other horizontal ones; mother and child each controlled a knob and the mother was able to help the child make appropriate moves as necessary. Approximately 9% of the working class groups of mothers, as opposed to 68% of middle class mothers, referred to the model in their effort to explain what they were aiming to do. Their investigation led the researchers to think that where a mother is likely to limit the intellectual growth of her child, strategies used by her in interpreting the environment are predominantly imperative in character; they are not explanatory, they do not help the child to see how to use words for labelling objects and manipulating ideas. The consequences of specific behaviour are not explained in terms of what effects it might or might not have in the future, but rather in terms of immediate reward or punishment; horizons are thus likely to be restricted and the child's thinking remain egocentric.

There is evidence, too, that parental values vary according to class, and that these values have a fundamental influence on the way children

are reared (Cohn 1959). The working class parent has been found to value obedience, neatness and cleanliness, whereas the middle class parent is more likely to encourage curiosity, happiness, consideration and self-control.

These very values of the working class parent may inhibit motivation to achievement (McClelland 1961, p. 354) while the middle class parent by placing emphasis on internal rather than external controls may be influencing future development in ways that are not readily apparent.

For some years, then, researchers have tended to use a model based on class and socio-economic status to explain the observed difference between children's achievement. Recently, some studies have suggested that such a model is not completely satisfactory. A recent study (Miller 1972) which aimed to tease out possible reasons for observed social class differences in primary school achievement, investigated a sample of 489 children from two different boroughs in Middlesex. One was a mainly middle class dormitory area and the other a diversified industrial area. In addition to considering age, sex, family size, number of schools attended and social class, Dr. Miller included an anxiety measure and investigated many facets of family and child-adult relations - for example, demonstrativeness, child-centredness, overprotectiveness, controls and discipline, parental discord. Results suggested that there may be aspects of child rearing and the early relationships between a child and his parents which will have influenced his educational opportunity long before he reaches school. Positive factors included homes where there was independent thinking and freedom of discussion among all members and where there was "harmony between the values of school and the values of home." Adverse factors were strongly dominating parents, inclined to be "punitive and autocratic", who tended to make their children feel inferior and/or worried about the future. While social class remained an important variable, it did not explain the differences; the factors that emerged as associated with high or low achievement in school cut across social class. Dr. Miller's findings did not call in question the loving care that parents felt towards the child; rather that different interpretations of this could result in widely differing patterns of behaviour. He too showed how much more needs to be known about the nature of this crucial variable of the mother/child relationship.

In America, a series of investigations (The Harvard Pre-School Project, L. Burton-White) focussed on mother-child interaction and cast further doubt on the appropriateness of the class model. These studies are of potentially outstanding importance on two counts - firstly, because they concentrate attention on the years before three, and secondly, they suggest the possibility of an alternative model to class, as an explanation of differences between those children who do well and those who do not. The research has not yet progressed far enough

to provide more than tentative suggestions in this respect, but it does focus attention away from the possibly sterile argument that differences are a function of class and on to the more fruitful area of mother-child interaction.

The Harvard Pre-School Project began in 1965; it centred, not on interventionist work, as so many subsequent studies have done, but on "building the knowledge base" (L. Burton-White 1973). The aim was ultimately preventive rather than remedial. The researchers first took a sample of some 400 three, four and five year old children from a wide range of background, location, socio-economic status and ethnicity. These were carefully studied over a two year period and assessed according to the competence they developed in cognitive and linguistic skills, in social play with other children and in using their ability and resources. On the basis of observations at this stage, the researchers felt that the qualities which distinguished the most competent six year olds were already clearly present at three.

Subsequent stages of the study, therefore, concentrated on the 0 - 3 range. The 'most competent children' were matched with the 'least competent' ones and an intensive study made of the mother's inter-action with her child(ren) when the next baby was born into the family.

Two factors emerged as of overall importance in early childhood education. One was the development of locomotor skills (learning to walk) and the other was learning to talk. The first enabled the child to extend his field of exploration and enlarged the range of stimuli; the second enabled the child to communicate more satisfactorily, to achieve richer personal relationships.

The researchers concentrated on the different ways that mothers, the natural mediators, handled problems arising from these two developing skills. They did not suggest that certain types of handling caused subsequent differences in competence, but they analysed which aspects in child-rearing and in the environment varied between those who developed well and those who did less well. Measures of socio-economic status, family structures and life styles were considered too coarse to account for differences which occurred across families, cultures and classes. So environment was defined in such a way as to include the child's own experience; the extent of a mother's participation in play experience, how far she directly or indirectly influenced what he did.

Significant patterns of interaction were found between the groups of mothers whose children developed greater 'competence' and those who developed less well. In terms of quantity alone, the 'competent' children experienced more interaction with their mothers, approximately 41% as against 26%. But the quality and the type of interaction were different too. Most successful relationships depended on a mother who was consistent, who was permissive in that she did not

unduly limit the ways in which her child's curiosity could be satisfied. She provided an environment that was full of objects of interest and she drew her child into collaboration with her in exploration of it. She was the sort of mother who would explain to her child and who would praise achievements. From a very early age (12 - 15 months), mothers of the children who developed well spent longer in activities like 'reading a book together', doing puzzles (15% of observation hours), while other mothers spent about 5% of their time on such activities. Moreover as the more 'competent' children grew older, there was a sharp decrease in "low intellectual activities" while mothers of the less competent children continued at about the same level. The mode of interaction was different too; when the 'more competent'children were under two years,mothers were inclined to be restrictive, but after this age, this practice decreased and activity was likely to be encouraged with "teaching and facilitative techniques" - e.g. real choices. A reverse pattern emerged with the other mothers, however; they became more restrictive as the child grew older.

It seemed that direct and indirect action played a formative part in the developing competence, but that this was not dependent on a high school education, being comfortably off or even having a father in the home. Of considerably greater importance was the mother's emotional state - no woman who was seriously depressed was able to do a good job; there also seems to be a negative correlation between houseproud and meticulous mothers and happy and competent children. They were also more likely to take risks, that is, they were not over protective. They talked to their children at a level they could understand and led their child to expect help, but not all the time. Indeed, they did not spend all the day "rearing their children", many of them had a part-time job. But they created an environment with plenty of stimulus, with a secure framework and emotional stability.

One particular finding seems to sum up this research with special poignancy; it is that 'more competent' children spent more time in high chairs and the less competent in playpens - i.e. while mothers of less competent children were primarily worried with the safety, mothers of the more competent children were equally conscious of their child's need for stimulus and involvement with their environment. Considered from the point of view of the child's experience, it is enlightening to contrast the outlook of the latter, restricted in movement by bars, living in a land of giants, where any attempt to look up to their world must impose the physical strain of tipping the head back on the vertebrae, like balancing a big brick on the top of a delicately balanced pile; by contrast, the child in the high chair is more likely to be integrated in the

family, to be able to see what is going on, to be talked to, to get attention and to 'interact' without strain.

Whichever way we look at it, some children are obviously disadvantaged. It has been established also that those in Social Classes five, six, seven (low income groups), who are badly housed, and with a large number of children or only one parent figure, are at a fundamental disadvantage even before they are born (Wedge and Prosser 1973). Yet many of the 'disadvantaged', in spite of greater need, and even where services are available, do not make full use of them. Findings relating to use of health services (Wedge and Prosser) showed that one in three of disadvantaged children never attended an infant welfare clinic, whereas among ordinary children only one in five did not attend. Two thirds of ordinary children attended regularly while only one third of the disadvantaged did so. The latter group was also less likely to have received any protection against polio, diphtheria and smallpox. In spite of limiting and difficult home conditions, only one in seven, compared with one in five 'non-disadvantaged' children had had any kind of pre-school experience.

Attempts have been made to compensate for such disadvantage both in England and in America. Project Headstart (Cicirelli et al. 1969) comprised some 1000 projects, part of a 'War on Poverty'. Results were disappointing, but three main points emerge from the evaluation:

1. the impracticality of expecting long term benefits from short term intervention. Leon Eisenberg has used the simile of food - no-one would assume that six months on a first class diet would ensure continued good health if the regime were discontinued.
2. some measures used to assess results - mainly Stanford Binet tests - were inappropriate.
3. the vital factor in persistence of any improvement is the extent to which parents and the community are involved (Bronfenbrenner 1972).

These conclusions are supported by English studies which have shown the overwhelming importance of parental attitudes (Douglas; Plowden 1967) and the effectiveness of community participation (Halsey 1972; Midwinter 1972).

The crucial assumption here is that by involving parents, a cycle of improvement is set in motion, organising the environment from which the child comes - as opposed to a cycle of deprivation, described by Sir Keith Joseph (1972) whereby certain families are trapped in a mesh of disadvantage from one generation to the next.

But if programmes of intervention are, as envisaged in the White Paper, to be largely based on institutional provision such as nursery classes, schools and day nurseries (Para. 24), how are these to reach those mothers

who are unlikely to take the initiative in making use of facilities, let alone in participating? Unless there is a clear understanding not only of the role of parental participation, but also the dynamics of it, how can it be achieved?

Yet there is a lack of research evidence on both these counts. Anecdotal and subjective accounts of experiences in successful parental involvement, however, and the Harvard Pre-School Project, suggest that stress of all kinds and a sense of personal failure and hopelessness are important inhibiting factors and militate against successful mothering (Burton-White and Jean Carew 1973). It is therefore amongst the literature of poverty that we shall look next for theories to account for non-take up of provision and non-participation.

CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER IV

Survey of the "Culture of Poverty"

On the face of it, parents who do not wish to be involved in pre-school provision may reasonably take the view that they wish to enjoy the company of their children at home; that the time from birth to five is particularly rich in mother-child and father-child interaction, and that this period should therefore most profitably be spent in the home. As parents often put it: "I'm going to lose them at five, so I want to enjoy them as long as I can."

But the anecdotal evidence surveyed in previous chapters also suggests that another group of parents who are less likely to take advantage of such provision may be characterised by a sense of isolation, of personal failure, hopelessness or, to use the term current in the American literature, "alienation". These characteristics bear a marked resemblance to the descriptions given by social anthropologists of poor communities in under-developed areas, and collectively defined by them as "the culture of poverty". It might therefore be of value to consider in more detail the literature of such anthropological material, with a view to formulating possible hypotheses or analogies with more technologically advanced societies.

It was Oscar Lewis who evoked the term "culture of poverty" to encapsulate the psychological attitudes that accompany,and grow out of, poverty. He studied communities in Mexico City, San Juan, Puerto Rico and New York City (1961; 1965), and concluded that the hallmarks of such a 'culture' were lack of participation in community undertakings, a minimum of organisation outside the extended family, the need to assume adult responsibilities early in life, together with a cluster of negative attitudes. These include feelings of powerlessness, dependence and inferiority. Above all, Lewis maintains that these characteristics are self-perpetuating, from generation to generation; it is in this sense that they combine to form a "culture of poverty" as distinct from poverty itself.

This same theme has been developed by Michael Harrington (1962). He described the culture of poverty as being marked by a low level of aspiration, hopelessness, and a feeling that life is controlled by fate. "Each disability is the more intense because it exists within a web of disabilities. And if one problem is solved, and the others left constant, there is little gain."

A distillation of the findings of social scientists in relation to the "psychology of the poor" (Haggsttrom 1964) characterises them as having interests restricted to themselves and their families, with stress on the 'intimate, the sensory, the detailed, the personal.' Greater importance is attached to skills needed to cope with the present situation rather than with those needed to progress. Co-operation is often difficult, due to apathy, lack of appropriate skills or

acceptance of things as they are. They do not plan ahead, horizons are foreshortened and immediate satisfactions and rewards are sought. Unity springs from hostility towards those better off and by whom they feel themselves exploited. Unable to control their destiny, the 'poor' consider themselves victims of chance, fate or luck - that is, external forces, as compared with the better off, who believe that their own 'internal' decisions operate in their lives.

The 'culture of poverty' is clearly understood by these writers to be distinct from the condition of poverty. They demonstrate how some low income families are conspicuous for their capacity to strive for distant goals in spite of their difficulties. These are often those with high educational aspirations - students, artists and some immigrant groups. There are also those religious groups who take a vow of poverty, but exhibit none of the so-called 'psychology of the poor'. Lewis himself pointed out that poor communities, such as the Indian lower castes, the Jews of Eastern Europe, or poor groups in some socialist countries, while economically deprived, do not necessarily have a culture of poverty. He maintains that "it is much more difficult to eradicate the culture of poverty than poverty per se" (La Vida 1967). Nevertheless, in comparing the slum district of Havana both before and after the Cuban Revolution, he noted that while hardship and poverty remained, the hope, the sense of purpose and the possibility of achievement engendered by the Revolution had removed the 'culture of poverty'.

But where a 'culture of poverty' still exists, its relevance is apparent in that the attitudes associated with it would be likely to militate against the use of pre-school provision. Education, with its emphasis on deferred rewards, would not be a priority; the experience of many parents at school would confirm belief in its irrelevance to their needs. Given the choice, they would ignore it. The hostility underlying their unity would lead to a feeling of alienation. This has been described as 'them' and 'us' by Richard Hoggart (1957), who pointed to the consequently small proportion of working class mothers who took full advantages of the services of a baby clinic. While not suggesting a causal relationship, research evidence has shown that working class mothers do indeed make less use of dentists, clinics, inoculation facilities, etc (Douglas 1964; Harvey Goldstein 1972). Hoggart maintained that any facility provided by authority was mistrusted and shunned. The same doubts, amounting sometimes to antagonism, operate in the schools (Jackson 1962). In addition, a fatalistic view of life could inhibit parental initiative in seeking out facilities; it would result in acceptance of the status quo. Even where parents wished to take advantage of the provision, they would be hampered by the lack of appropriate skills (cf

Parfit 1972) and their concept of time and their life-style would hinder regular attendance.

This 'psychology' appears to affect not only the general outlook of parents but also to operate directly on the mother-child relationship in a number of ways (Bruner 1970). One of the most crucial lies in the contrasting manner in which respective goals are defined and realised. Given that a mother normally sets goals for her child, considerable difference has been found in the ways middle class and lower working class mothers instruct their children (Hess and Shipman 1966). Follow-up data showed that "the more a mother feels externally controlled when her child is four years old, the more likely the child is to have a low I.Q. and a poor academic record at age six or seven." (Hess 1969) Bruner cites a further on-going study (Maxine Schoggen 1969), which also aimed to clarify differences observed in goal-seeking and direction. Here too, preliminary findings suggested a significant difference in the stress laid on goal directedness between those mothers who felt 'externally' controlled and those who did not.It seems too that where the consequences of an action are seen in terms of immediate rather than deferred punishment or reward, the child is more likely to relate to authority than to reason, to comply in his behaviour but not to reflect upon it. His role is passive.

Here again, a number of studies suggest that children with a more passive outlook tend not to achieve their potential(Bayley and Schaefer 1964; Sontag, Baker and Nelson 1958); while those who are strongly motivated are more likely to grow brighter as they grow older (Robinson and Robinson 1968). Not only is the middle class child more active and strongly achievement orientated than lower working class children (Lott and Lott 1963; Mussen, Urbano and Bouterline Young 1961 - quoted by Bruner 1970), but there is evidence that this passive tendency is heightened in city and urban poverty as opposed to rural poverty. Graves (1969) compared two rural and urban communities, one Spanish-American and the other Ugandan. She found, in interviews with the mothers, that those outside the urban areas were more likely to believe their children could be taught skills, and to take their share of responsibility in family life. The city mother found her confidence reduced and this appeared to limit her belief in her children's capacity to cope with a variety of situations and to master new skills. Intimidated by her environment, this type of mother withdrew within her family.

What this evidence suggests is that a cluster of negative attitudes such as those associated with the 'Psychology of the Poor' could make a fundamental difference to the response of parents to pre-school facilities as well as to the crucial mother-child relationship and the child's potential achievement.

Such a situation, if it is indeed self-generating, is closely related to the concept of the 'cycle of deprivation' (Sir Keith Joseph 1972). This now popular catch-phrase reflects the observation that problems are found in the same family generation after generation; it implies that the cause is deprivation transmitted through the family. No doubt genetic transmission plays a part, but there are reasons for thinking that environmental factors other than those which operate within the family promote the situation. The structure of society itself, supported by law, imposes certain constraints ensuring the persistence of privilege and the unequal distribution of wealth. Society discriminates against certain social groups (PEP study on racial discrimination, 1967); schools are not all equally effective (Where, Oct, 1967); there is the varied influence of different cultures (Deutsch, Katz and Jensen 1968) and even geographical location, as in the attributing of low achievement of fenland children to their comparative isolation and in-breeding.

Whatever the origins of the observed 'disadvantage', it represents an urgent social problem with which poverty is strongly associated. But there is a further point, concerning the nature of poverty itself. It can be interpreted in two ways - as an absolute and as a relative concept. Much social policy, both in this country and in America, has been aimed at eliminating poverty conceived as an absolute. That is, an effort has been made to raise the living standards of the poor so that no one should fall below an arbitrary poverty line.

There is no doubt that, in England, the general income level of the poor has been raised (Coates 1970). Yet it is still possible for people to feel poor (ibid). The 'absolute' view is retrospective; it does not take sufficiently into account the fact that, while the standard of living of the poor has been raised, the incomes of the rich have increased in proportion. The situation of the 'poor' in relation to the norms of society has not therefore radically altered.

It has been argued (Jencks 1972) that 'the cost of living' is the cost of participation in a social system. He has pointed out that goods and services which made it possible to live on fifteen dollars a week during the Depression were no longer available to a family with the same real income (i.e. 40 dollars a week) in 1964. "Eating habits had changed, and many cheap foods had disappeared from the stores. Most people had enough money to buy an automobile, so public transport had atrophied, and families without automobiles were much worse off than during the Depression. The labor market had also changed, and a person without a telephone could not get or keep many jobs. A home without a telephone was more cut off socially than when few people had telephones and more people 'dropped by'. Housing arrangements had changed too. During the Depression, many people could not afford indoor plumbing and got by with a privy. By the 1960's, privies were illegal in most places. Those who could not afford an indoor toilet

ended up in buildings which had broken toilets. For this they paid more than their parents had paid for privies."

A similar change has taken place in England. It is aptly illustrated by the comments made by Ken Coates and Richard Silburn (1970) concerning their interviews with rehoused members of their original sample in St. Anns, Nottingham, five years after their study of poverty in the area.

> "In a nutshell...we found that family poverty had increased among them. The numbers of families in poverty had jumped from a third to a half, while the proportion of the total child populations involved had increased from 50% to 60%. Increased rents and travelling costs had reduced the amount of income householders could make available to meet expenses on food, clothing, and other basic necessities. The whole sample, even when living above the somewhat arbitrarily determined 'poverty line'... had been pushed down noticeably closer to it."

In the face of such observations, given the present structure of society and the inflationary spiral, the situation is such that the separation of the poor from the rest of society will continue in terms of both material goods and attitudes. It is accepted that the poor and the better off have their individual life-styles. On one hand, there is a hardening of attitudes towards the poor due to the importance currently attached to individual effort and consequent achievement. On the other hand, when progress and achievement is considered unattainable, there is a natural reaction against those who have progressed and a withdrawal from agencies which are thought to wield power, but which cannot be influenced (Hoggart 1957, op. cit.)

Discussion of the nature of this separation is pursued in the study of poverty referred to above (Coates and Silburn 1970). The researchers confirmed that they had indeed observed widespread feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness and despair; they saw that their respondents "did not participate to any significant degree in the 'major institutions' of the larger society, even where a basic self-interest might be assumed." Instead, there was a fundamental resignation and acceptance of the situation. Rather than identifying a 'culture of poverty', however, they perceived sub-cultural groupings whose attitudes to work, family life and morality gave rise to antagonism among others in the same community. The 'most poor' were not a homogeneous group; some lived a crisis existence, others shared certain self-effacing attitudes and modest ambitions. But it was not felt that this amounted to a 'distinctive cultural pattern', or a 'detachment from accepted value systems'. It was rather the "expression of a 'realistic' appraisal of their possibilities, given that they had so little power at their disposal to change them." (Op. cit. p. 167)

An alternative interpretation of such observations has been

propounded by Haggstrom (op. cit. 1964); he has argued that since people who suffer material disadvantage are not always despairing and hopeless, one cannot use poverty alone to explain the 'psychology of the poor' or the 'culture of poverty'. He cites examples in the United States where the per capita rise in the expenditure on public welfare did not result in psychological changes among the recipients. He also compares the variation between states as to the size of payments made to comparable families; this variation is in some cases considerable, but there does not appear to have been any accompanying difference in psychological characteristics.

It therefore appears that lack of income itself is not the unique element associated with the psychology of the poor; there is also no general agreement regarding the existence or otherwise of a 'culture of poverty'. What is clear is that where certain negative attitudes predominate, the web of disadvantage is likely to be more closely woven and its victims separated from the rest of society. This view is reinforced by the association of more positive attitudes with a greater degree of hope and power felt among the poor (Coates and Silburn 1970). It was found, for example, that trade unionists (although low-paid workers) who felt they exercised some power, were less characteristic of the psychology of poverty than those who did not belong to such an organisation.

It is as well, therefore, to examine these negative attitudes more closely. They have been further defined (Seeman 1959) as 'alienation' and comprise a cluster of five, with alternative meanings - namely, powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement. Powerlessness originated in the Marxist view of the worker's condition in a capitalist society, that is, the extent to which he has no part in decision making and therefore feels he cannot influence the political system, the industrial structure, or international affairs. This concept is very close to Rotter's thesis of internal versus external control of re-inforcements, whereby an individual feels that he has personal control over events or that he is subject to external controls such as chance or fate. Seeman emphasised that alienation refers not to a generalised 'index of personality adjustment', however, but to an individual's view of himself in relation to socio-political events. (Rotter, 1966)

When considered out of the context of poverty, it can be seen that powerlessness can apply, not only to those in low income groups, but also in many other situations. Take, for example, the position of those in the lower strata of highly structured organisations; such men and women are completely dependent on 'bosses' for their 'fate'. Power is vested in one group or individual and can operate in such a way as to limit the extent to which a subordinate can take responsibility, gain confidence and self-esteem.

The second interpretation of alienation is that of meaninglessness.

This is inter-related, though independent of, the concept of powerlessness; meaninglessness refers to a person's understanding of what he observes. If he is able to predict that certain actions will have certain consequences, he is in a position to make meaningful choices. If, on the other hand, he feels he cannot be sure of the outcome of any behaviour, then he is subject to a feeling of meaninglessness. Seeman cites the example of Germans in the post-first war period who were unable to understand the alternative explanations of the disasters of their time and "substituted the Jews as a simplified solution for this unclarity."

Normlessness refers specifically to the situation which occurs when the goals which are culturally approved are beyond the means or ability of individuals to achieve. It derives from Durkheim's concept of "anomie", where the normal rules for social behaviour have broken down. In this situation, it is the pragmatic solution which will be adopted, regardless of whether it is 'culturally' acceptable or not (cf. revolution). Such a situation has been noted (Merton R. K., 'Social Theory and Social Structure', Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press 1949, p. 128) to lead to low predictability in behaviour (meaninglessness) and to a belief in luck (powerlessness).

In the context of alienation, isolation refers to the sort of isolation experienced by an intellectual who does not share the beliefs that are typically highly valued in the society in which he lives. It is a reflection of an individual's commitment to 'popular' culture. It does not refer to isolation in the sense of lack of 'social' adjustment or social isolation from friends and family.

As for self-estrangement, Seeman points out that it is often difficult to know what a person is estranged from; but the symptoms of this concept of alienation spring from the feeling that one is less than one might be if only circumstances were otherwise. It is the degree of satisfaction felt with oneself. Self-estrangement emerges where "our craving for consumption has lost all connection with the real needs of man" (Eric Fromm, 'The Sane Society'). It leads to feelings of insecurity, a preoccupation with appearances and tendency to conform. Seeman isolates as part of this concept, a 'loss of intrinsic meaning or pride in work' - which Marx held to be an essential feature of alienation. It may be (Riesman David, 'The Lonely Crowd', New Haven; Yale University Press 1950, p. 49) that one is "aware of a discrepancy between one's ideal self and one's actual self image"; a child learns that "nothing in his character, no possession he owns, no inheritance of name or talent, no work he has done, is valued for itself, but only for its effect on others." One cannot assume that apparent affluence precludes feelings of self-estrangement; the position of the working

class family in financial difficulty may feel essentially the same as the executive enmeshed in the 'rat race' and involved in a style of living which he cannot afford and does not identify with, but feels he cannot abandon without jeopardising his'prospects'; yet he feels no real satisfaction in what he is doing.

It is common knowledge that there are experiences shared by all men, irrespective of social class, over which they have no control. These include personal injury, death in the family, chronic ill-health, dismissal from work and trauma and shock of all kinds. Such experiences can generate negative attitudes and feelings of powerlessness. Some studies suggest that wherever events (good or bad) occur and cluster, in which stress is generated or the possibility of effective action is reduced and the individual feels at the mercy of external forces, such a pattern is predictive of future health change (T. H. Holmes,1967).

The question then arises as to whether such patterns are associated with other responses. One study which suggests that they might be, investigated the 'Social Characteristics of Lower Working Class Utilizers and Under-utilizers of Maternity Care Services' in Aberdeen(McKinlay and McKinlay 1972). This exploratory study examined the marital background, housing, education and employment patterns of 48 under-utilizers and 39 utilizers. When social class, education and geographical proximity were controlled, clear and distinct patterns between the two groups emerged. The under-utilizers were almost entirely dependent on parents or relatives for accommodation and tended to move about from one set of relatives to another every few weeks. Once such a family qualified for a council house, however, they usually remained there without further moves. In addition to the pattern of housing instability, under-utilizers were younger than the other group, all between 18 and 23 years of age, with a mean of 20 years, as compared with 53% over 20 among utilizers. A most striking finding was the high number of pregnancies among low utilizers and the high proportion of these that were either illegitimate or pre-nuptial conceptions. So two contrasting social profiles emerged of the two groups; the under-utilizers were found to live a crisis existence, frequently associated with lack of permanent accommodation, overcrowding, financial difficulties and frequent sickness - conditions which generate stress and combine to create feelings of powerlessness. Utilizers, on the other hand, had stable housing arrangements; they were in regular employment; and they were more likely to have planned their marriage and pregnancies.

How far, or even whether, these observations were a direct consequence of physical conditions arising from poverty or were due to psychological barriers did not fall within the scope of the investigation. Nor, of course, is there any indication as to whether a similar pattern is repeated in subsequent generations.

But another investigation of low income mothers from three poor districts in Los Angeles regarding utilisation of preventive health care suggested that the more well known barriers to take up of provision were reinforced by alienation, including feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and social isolation (Bullough 1972). A major hypothesis in this study of some eight hundred mothers, was that in addition to the practical barriers rooted in poverty, there were important psychological barriers which also operated. This was based on previous research which suggested that alienation was linked with under-utilization by mothers, of facilities for immunisation and other maternal services (Morris, Hatch and Chipman 1966; Nakagawa 1971). Using scales of powerlessness, hopelessness and social isolation, Bullough found that while low income was the main barrier to use of dental services, alienation was a significant variable in family planning. The relationship between powerlessness and the status of the last pregnancy (ie. whether or not it was planned) was significant both above and below the poverty line.

Seeman (1963) who developed a number of 'alienation' scales, found that those persons who felt they had little control over their own lives were less attentive to cues in their environment which would enable them to acquire knowledge. Thus tuberculosis patients who felt they could not control their own fate knew less about their disease than those who felt more 'powerful'. In another study, this time of the degree of powerlessness felt by reformatory inmates, Seeman found that those who felt less controlled by external forces learned more about parole and facts which might help them when free, than those who felt they had little control over their destiny.

Seeman also conducted an investigation on a different cultural population, that of Swedish workers, in relation to membership or non-membership of unions, activity within unions and their overall knowledge of political matters. Correlations between active membership and internality were significant; lack of participation appeared to be related to belief in fate (externality).

Even where the respondent appears convinced of the advantages or disadvantages of a particular action, the degree to which they feel internally or externally controlled appears to have some bearing on subsequent action. A group of studies (Straits and Sechrest 1963) (James, Woodruff and Werner 1965) investigated the relationship between internal and external control to smoking. The findings showed that males, as opposed to females, who in general felt themselves controlled by external forces, chance, luck or fate, were significantly less likely to give up smoking, even though they were convinced of the damage it could do.

As has been pointed out (page 9) in relation to expressed intention of take-up of pre-school provision and subsequent failure to do so, it

cannot always be assumed that an articulated interest results in the action one had been led to expect. In a study of middle-class blacks, (Bullough 1967, 1969) referred to in the Los Angeles study already cited, it was found that although support for the idea of integration had been expressed, feelings of individual powerlessness appeared to constrain movement away from the segregated residential areas.

The studies which have been described or referred to concern aspects of behaviour which could be relevant to take-up of pre-school provision - namely, problems of communication and utilisation, as well as the difference between expressed intention or interest and subsequent action. After all, acquisition of information is a prerequisite to making use of any service, including pre-school provision; although the populations were obviously very different from the one with which we are concerned, Seeman's study of factors inhibiting prisoners' and patients' interest in potentially useful information may indicate variables which are common to all. The studies of under-utilization of welfare services have more apparent relevance.

They all suggest that barriers to utilisation of statutory services exist which result in a 'withdrawal' from social interaction. It may be that non-use of pre-school provision may be the result of such an 'alienation' complex. It is also noteworthy that while most of the literature on the 'culture of poverty' provides data on under-developed areas, evidence from Jencks (1972), and Coates and Silburn in particular, firmly underlines the possibility that feelings associated with poverty can and do exist in our technological society, even though the general level of income of the "poor" is so much higher than 20 years ago.

CHAPTER IV

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PART II THE STUDY

CHAPTER V

Objectives and Methodology

In the foregoing chapters, it has been suggested that some families may not take advantage of pre-school provision even if it becomes available, and attention has been drawn to certain factors which might influence such a response.

The study which is the subject of this report aimed to throw light on this type of response and, in particular, to attempt to analyse some of the characteristics of 'non-responding' families, with the broader aim of postulating alternative forms of pre-school provision which might be more acceptable to them. It sought to achieve these aims, in the first place, by conducting an exploratory study in one clearly defined and socially homogeneous area where pre-school provision was not available, but where it was known to all who might qualify for it (i.e. all mothers with three and four year old children) that such provision would become available. By studying the characteristics of the total population of families with pre-school children in this area, and subsequently providing the facility, and thence observing the 'take-up' behaviour of the sample, we expected to witness the spontaneous emergence of a t least three distinct groups, comprising:-

1. Families who already sent their children to pre-school facilities outside the immediate neighbourhood.
2. Those who kept their pre-school children at home, but would welcome the new facility, would place their children's names on the waiting list and would, when the facility was installed, make immediate use of it.
3. Finally, a group would emerge which would probably be more hesitant about enrolling on a waiting list and would ultimately not use the new facility.

Such a design had a number of distinct merits. By being undertaken in an area without previous pre-school provision, it would not be biased by an existing situation, in which some mothers might be using local provision and others not doing so. Moreover, because the study was aimed primarily at characterising those who did not wish to take part in pre-schooling, it was important that such provision should be presented in an unbiased, abstract way, so that the study could reasonably claim that when mothers said they did not "want" pre-schooling, it was not a subjective reaction to an existing head-teacher, or playgroup. Even more important, there was no way for the researchers to know the subsequent behavioural response of the subjects to the provision once it had been established. Because the groupings were based entirely on either the respondents' own replies to questions or, finally, to their actions, the study was possibly more free from researcher bias than might otherwise have been the case.

The main drawback of the study, concentrated as it was in one area and with inevitably small numbers, is that any conclusions are biased by the individual case and the 'hypothesis building' function may be distorted by the

particular characteristic of the chosen sample. Given this caveat, support for small-scale, in-depth studies is found in several sources. Yudkin (1963) emphasises the "value of 'studies in depth' of comparatively small groups. They can often throw as much or more light on a situation than the larger statistically valid studies"; and in 'Education, Health and Behaviour' (1970, Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, p. 360) it is stated that "As studies by Douglas, Pringle, Butler and Davie have shown, national surveys can be worthwhile. But in our view, more is to be gained by comparative studies of several areas, each of which is fairly homogeneous and which differs from other areas in important respects." Fundamental to this type of study is the possibility of replication, and if the recommendations to survey small areas before introducing new provision (Parfit 1972; Halsey 1972; Report of the unpublished Cheshire Project 1973) are widely acted upon, prevailing patterns in other areas will emerge to form a more comprehensive picture.

Choice of sample was influenced by the decision of the London Borough of Hillingdon to place Terrapin buildings designed primarily for use as playgroups on seven council estates designated as being 'in special need'. Such designation referred to those areas where there was no pre-school provision; there were no other criteria. Indeed the Borough cannot be described as disadvantaged and it is not an Educational Priority Area. Its social and demographic characteristics resemble other outer London Boroughs, notably the 'outer suburban' group comprising, in addition to Hillingdon, Bexley and Havering. All wards in the Borough fell within the first three of twelve categories of social status, according to a cluster analysis carried out by the G.L.C. Research and Intelligence Unit (Population of Hillingdon 1972). The general standard of housing and amenity (discussed at greater length in the next chapter) is therefore higher, even in an 'area of special need', than in many examples we have referred to in our analysis of the problem of non-take up of provision. This investigation, however, was concerned with barriers to utilisation which might cut across all classes of society and could be distorted or overlaid by bad housing, overcrowding and lack of social amenity. Studies of 'take-up' (Parfit, op. cit.; Halsey) have inevitably been carried out in areas where, to some extent, conditions were extreme, and involvement was partly related to the very poverty of the environment. It was therefore thought preferable to study a community nearer the norm of society, without marked advantages or disadvantages, but distinguished by the fact that pre-school provision would become newly available in it. By choosing an area where extreme conditions did not prevail and so, to some extent, spanning both class and economic structure, conclusions might, with more force, be generalised.

In outline, the study fell into seven stages:-

1. Definition of the catchment area of one primary school, within which the new

provision was envisaged; surveying the area to pinpoint the number of families with children under five who qualified for use of the new facilities, as well as those who already made use of some form of pre-schooling.

2. Ensuring that the new facilities be advertised in such a way that each family in the catchment area would receive personal notification of the new provision.
3. Development of a semi-structured, pre-coded interview schedule which involved testing techniques for interviewing mothers in their own homes.
4. Interviewing every mother with a child of three or four in the catchment area.
5. Following the introduction of the facility, checking on the number and exact location of families who came forward to make use of it.
6. Consideration, in relation to socio-economic, environmental and psychological variables, of three different groups of families within the project:-
   Group I: Those families who made no use of the provision.
   Group II: Those who responded to the publicity, enrolled their children and subsequently made use of the facility.
   Group III: Those who continued to make use of provision outside the area.
   A very small subgroup which was also studied, comprised those who initially showed interest, but did not persist, or, having stated their intention not to use the facility, eventually did so.
7. Analysis with specific focus on the following questions:-
   a: Are Group I mothers different from mothers in Groups II and III?
   b: If so, what is the nature of these differences?
   c: What do they imply for the provision of pre-school facilities to the community at large?

Instruments

From the outset, it was intended that the chief method of data collection would be via the interview. Despite its disadvantages, it had, for this particular project, the overriding merit of flexibility. The major concern of the investigator seeking to obtain information in depth about the background of a sample of mothers who might have difficulty in articulating their thoughts as well as a deep suspicion about enquiries concerning their households, was to create and maintain a relationship of mutual trust and confidence. Hence any method other than a conversational and informal one-to-one 'chat', based on a semi-structured interview schedule, had to be dismissed. Complete co-operation and a very high response rate were both vital in a study which, by its nature, was likely to carry a small sample size.

To guide the interviewer and to facilitate coding of responses, a pre-coded schedule was developed with some two hundred variables (Appendix I).

This was constructed after extensive interviews with people concerned with a wide range of pre-school provision. In the course of its evolution, it was tried out on individuals and on some 30 mothers with young children on a neighbouring estate.

In its original form, the schedule covered basic background data - size and composition of family, ages of parents and children, schooling and attitudes to education, occupation, income, health and housing. It explored family relationships, friendship patterns and social habits, as well as the mother's perception of the young child's needs and her relationship with her children. Another section concerned the use of pre-school provision and the extent to which mothers thought that existing or proposed provision met their needs. Finally, there was included a number of questions, which it was hoped would form the basis of a 'Horizon' scale.

The preliminary investigation resolved initial doubts about the difficulties of questions in sensitive areas like income, family planning, age and occupation. Provided such questions were not introduced early in the interview, it was found that mothers were quite prepared to answer without hesitation and, indeed, very often volunteered the information before being asked. It was, however, important to relate the questions to pre-school provision and to explain why we were interested in topics that at first did not seem to bear any relation to the subject.

As it evolved, the schedule dropped some questions, notably most of those on the 'Horizon' scale, intended to give some indication of the extent to which a family was able to consider the future. It became evident that these were not measuring horizons so much as a mother's adaptation to her situation. For example, on the assumption that the 'planning', well-organised mother, not in the lowest income group, would shop once or twice a week, or in bulk, a question was included on shopping habits. It was found that the usual pattern was for mothers to shop every day; but this was not because they could not see the advantages of shopping weekly or were unable to do so. It was a reflection of a preference for 'fresh' food (possibly a rationalisation), together with the fact that most mothers took their children 'out' in the afternoon and shopping fitted in with this and gave point to the excursion. Such a question, then, did not differentiate between mothers, although it did suggest that, as a group, the horizons of these mothers were bounded by their homes and families, and were limited to the immediate vicinity.

In the final version of the interview schedule, questions which showed most variation in response were retained. In addition, subjective ratings were made of the language a mother used in speaking to her child, ranging from over-conscientious explanations to monosyllabic interjections and smacking, in the same sort of situation. Similar ratings were made of the 'coping' and 'non-coping' mother,

based on her attitude to the home and observation of it.

Items finally covered the following topics, though not in this order:-

1. Family structure:
   - size and composition of family
   - one-parent families
   - age at which married and family started
2. Environment:
   - type of housing and accommodation
   - amenities in the house and vicinity
   - attitudes to accommodation, neighbours and neighbourhood
   - play facilities for the under fives
3. Social Class and Economic Background:
   - social class according to father's employment
   - mother's occupation before and after marriage
   - family income
   - spending habits
4. Educational Experience of the Family:
   - education and training of father and mother
   - educational priorities
5. Social Background:
   - family social network
   - areas of wife's social contact
   - reading habits, general interests and participation in community activity
   - father's domestic role
6. Family Health:
   - specific illnesses
   - areas of 'concern'
7. Pre-school Provision (as it existed):
   - use made of any provision
   - intended use made of any provision
   - importance attached to particular aspects of pre-schooling (GRID)
   - mother's perception of child's needs
8. Desired Pre-school Provision:
   - times and numbers of sessions
   - proximity
   - staffing and organisation
   - payment
   - degree of involvement

9. Communication:

- ways mothers heard of the new provision
- ways they considered would be the most effective

Incorporated in the schedule for coding purposes (see section 7 above) but administered separately, was also a Grid derived from a small study of 'Playgroups and Parental Involvement' carried out by Dr. Peter Saxby of Moorhaven Hospital, Devon, in January, 1973. In pat of his questionnaire, Dr. Saxby was concerned to discover how mothers who had made use of playgroup provision viewed the facilities. He prepared a grid of eight statements relating to different aspects of playgroup provision; mothers were asked to rate the degree of importance attached to each aspect on a five point scale. Two hundred questionnaires were sent out to mothers in four Devon playgroups and 168 were anonymously returned. These statements were used in the present study by the research team, together with five added ones (Appendix I, Part II of the Schedule, columns 68-80; and Appendix II).

It is impossible to be sure how far even the most relaxed, consistent and 'frank' interview has recorded more than a sophisticated series of defence mechanisms, designed to produce socially acceptable responses to enquiries from outsiders. Our respondents were at the receiving end of a considerable army of door-to-door salesmen, Council officials and official documentation concerning their housing. Apart from natural reluctance to reveal any more than superficial aspects of their private lives to strangers, some undoubtedly had an inherent and deep-seated suspicion of forms, tests or other paper documents. They were possibly educationally unsophisticated and therefore unprepared to give time to completing even the more simple of the standard tests. Moreover their immediate environment mitigated against any formal testing. The presence of small children, television, neighbours and the constant interruptions caused thereby, would not be conducive to paper and pencil data collection. Above all, such demands would have undermined the essential requirements of a trusting, warm, intimate bond between the interviewer and the subject.

For all these reasons, it was decided to keep the instrumentation down to a minimum. At the same time, it was recognised that it would greatly enhance the quality of the study if a few independent measures could be introduced in such a way as to be unobtrusive and form an almost integral part of the interview itself. Yet in the context of this investigation, there was a dearth of suitable standard measures. Personality could certainly be an important variable, but as measured by the E.P.I. Scale, it was felt likely to alienate respondents. Stress was thought to be an inhibiting factor, and the possibility of using the Wakefield Inventory was considered. This, however, was originally intended for the assessment of the severity of primary depressive illness (Psychol. Med. 1971, pp 143-149), and although it has been used to assess the degree of depression felt by mothers of

children at playgroups (Saxby, 1973), it was limited in scope, not widely known, and, except for Saxby's investigation, had not been used for this type of sample.

In the course of studying the literature on the psychology of the poor, however, the use of one particular measure recurred, especially in those studies concerned with barriers to utilisation of statutory services and information seeking. This was the Rotter I-E Scale (Appendix III).

Concepts behind this measure were first formulated by Julian Rotter, and were part of his social learning theory (1954). In place of the concepts of drive and drive reduction as an explanation of behaviour, Rotter laid stress on the importance of the situation as instrumental in providing cues for "generalised expectancy". He defined this expectancy in the following way:-

"When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his own action, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When the event is interpreted in this way by an individual, we have labeled this a belief in External Control. If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behaviour or his own relatively permanent characteristics we have termed this a belief in Internal Control". (Rotter 1966)

Rotter emphasised that the variable with which he was concerned related not to whether an individual was indeed controlled by internal or external forces, but only whether or not he believed this to be so (Ibid, p 4). He developed a scale of 25 pairs of statements, which were concerned only with the respondent's belief about the nature of the world; since they related only to the subject's expectations about control of re-inforcement, the test was thought to be a measure of generalised expectancy.

In his original monograph (1966), Rotter claimed that internal consistency estimates were relatively stable. Test-retest reliability for a one month period seemed consistent in two contrasting samples - elementary psychology students at Ohio State University and prisoners in Colorado Reformatory. Two factor analyses were carried out; several additional factors accounted for a small amount of variance and were found in a few of the items. The second analysis (Franklin, 1963) found that the general factor accounted for 53% of the variance and that all the items loaded significantly on it.

There is some indication, however, that the Rotter scale, in fact, measures at least two traits (Mirels, 1970). He found two factors (the same for males and females) relating to "felt mastery over the course of one's life" and a belief concerning the extent to which an individual is "deemed capable of exerting an impact on political institutions". Individual items, such as "Getting what I

want has little to do with luck" (a loading of .60 for men, and .47 for women), and "Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to with it" (loading .57 for men, .60 for women),represent the first factor. Items such as "The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions" (.68 for men, and .49 for women), and "With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption" (.64 for men, .60 for women), represent the second factor.

Although a substantial body of research exists on this measure, well over 325 studies (Macdonald 1972) - sufficient to "conclude that differences in a generalised expectancy of reinforcement influence behaviour across a wide variety of situations" (Nowicki, 1973, in press) - there are nevertheless a number of reservations relating to the use of this measure in the present study.

Firstly, one of the main types of behaviour in which it has been used relates to academic achievement (Crandall, Katovsky and Crandall, 1965; Nowicki and Strickland, 1973). The samples used by Rotter were also largely of students at university and therefore very different from the mothers in our sample. As has already been pointed out, the measure requires a response to each pair of items; thus, there is no choice and there is the possibility that some individuals would find the language difficult. There is, then, the risk that understanding of what was required might be limited both by educational background and unfamiliarity with American terminology. Indeed, there was no evidence to support or negate the appropriateness of the measure on an English working class sample, except the Aberdeen study of barriers to utilisation of health services (McKinley and McKinley, referred to on page 8, chapter 4).

Furthermore, a number of studies (Joe, 1972; Gold, 1969; Cone, 1971; Nowicki, 1973) reiterated differences which emerged between scores of men and women. For example, results showed a consistent and high relationship between internality and academic achievement in males, but not in females. Rotter (1966) suggested that there may be students who were originally competitive, but who used externality as a shield against failure. A more recent investigation (Nowicki and Segal, in the press) studied parental behaviour in relation to locus of control on 112 high school students - 58 males and 54 females; they found that the greater internality was associated with higher academic achievement in males and with greater social involvement for females. This in turn suggests that what is or is not considered socially desirable, i.e. the interpretation of the female role, could influence the degree of internality or externality expressed by females. This, then, could apply to our entire sample.

Finally, the Rotter scale has been used exclusively to measure differences between groups. Our interest certainly is in differences between groups,

but numbers were so small that it would have been preferable to use a measure which had been developed for discriminating between people as well as groups. One final caveat: in a paper presented at the American Psychological meeting, in Montreal, 1973 (opus cit.), Stephen Nowicki referred to his "uneasy feeling that locus of control had become a 'master motive'" - that too many studies related locus of control to other variables without consideration of how the respondent viewed his own situation. In this study, the researchers were very much concerned with how the subjects saw themselves; their approach to use of the scale was exploratory and tentative, and not definitive.

In spite of these reservations, it was decided to use the Rotter Locus of Control scale in the present study. It had, after all, in the studies referred to in previous chapters, appeared as a measure independent of education, intelligence, age and income; it had suggested a predictive relationship between participation in a variety of activities and the psychological barriers of feelings of powerlessness and alienation. It represented the results of considerable study and validation in the measurement of a trait which recurs in all sociological descriptions of the poor; as has already been pointed out, the same trait is found in varying degrees throughout the population. Clearly, it could have some relevance to factors which influence use or non-use of pre-school provision.

In addition to the schedule, the Grid and the Rotter scale, which were administered separately, it was decided to supplement these means of data collection by tape recording the interviews. It would, of course, have been much cheaper and easier to proceed with a structured interview. But it was felt that, given our subjects and our aims, the open, in-depth interview would be more productive; even with a very good interview, lasting perhaps ninety minutes, details of marital status, number of children, present situation, etc. can take a considerable time to ascertain and, for someone unused to it, the process can be an exhausting one. Yet, at the end of it, one may not have gleaned very much about the real life-style of the subjects. The problem, common to all social scientists, is to what extent respondents can be observed. Neither time nor money is on their side. In view of this, the advantages and disadvantages of tape recording interviews were considered. There were several problems. Firstly, the possibility that both interviewer and respondent would be inhibited by the fact of being recorded. Next, the practical problem of finding a machine that was not too heavy, but with a microphone that was sensitive enough to pick up general conversation at a distance. Finally, there was still the problem of transcription - basically one of time and cost.

After a few trial runs with a number of different machines, it was found that a Philips 2209 Tape Recorder offered a practical solution. It was found that both interviewer and interviewee forgot about recording. It allowed

a relationship of mutual confidence to be built up without the interruption of constant note-taking. Conversation could flow normally and the lively and spontaneous responses - or, sometimes, the hesitant and monosyllabic ones, were a witness to those 'intangibles' which would often have been lost, had it been impossible to listen to the conversation again. But the problem of transcription remained; it was found impractical to transcribe recordings of all interviews prior to coding. Costs for transcription were high and agencies were unable to keep up with the flow of tapes. It was therefore decided to tighten the schedule so that it could be mainly field coded. A random sample of one in ten, together with any interviews considered particularly rich in background data,were transcribed in full; the rest were still taped wherever possible and all were listened to by both field workers. This method also provided a very important check on interviewer bias and consistency of responses; it also enabled more than just the one person to judge the meaning and underlying attitude in individual answers. Experience in this study would endorse the opinion of the Newsons who, in 'Patterns of Infant Care' (1963) wrote that they were "fully persuaded of the virtue of sound recording for this type of interview"(i.e. talking to mothers in their own homes).

There were a few cases where it was necessary to rely entirely on the record of the schedule and personal notes made after the interview; this occurred where either the mother was dismayed at the idea of being recorded and it was felt that to persist would antagonise her or, more usually, where the noise and confusion of a young family and 'noises off' (lawn-mowers were most effective 'scramblers') were such that recording proved impractical.

Personal notes were kept wherever something relevant arose, not covered in the schedule or by tape recording; for example, visual impressions or physical responses to children or people. It frequently happened that responses had to be coded because they applied at the time of the interview but they would mask information that might be relevant in considering reasons for non-take up of provision - as with one mother who, when talking about income and how she managed, said that they had a comfortable income and "wanted for nothing" and then went on to say that it wasn't always like that; her husband was on seasonal work and at times in the winter, they had been "desperate" and "hated going down to the 'social' because of the atmosphere down there". They preferred to "go without" for a few weeks, rather than go there. She had previously been taking her child to a playgroup, which involved a bus ride, as well as the fees, and she had reluctantly decided not to continue. Now that there were only six months to go before starting school at five, it didn't "seem worth the bother". This was the sort of information which was recorded in personal notes made immediately after each interview and which was helpful in

recalling individual mothers and deepening understanding of problems which did not emerge from responses to the schedule.

In sum, instruments used were:-

1. The schedule, including the Saxby Grid on mother's rating of various aspects of playgroup provision.
2. The Rotter I-E scale.
3. A tape recorder was used to enhance and check the schedules.
4. Personal marginal notes reported on features which could not appear in the schedule.

Data so gathered was set against the criterion measure of the respondent's response to the new pre-school provision.

Sources of Error

A major weakness inherent in the study was that it was at the mercy of a time schedule which was beyond the control of the researchers, and, as delays in providing the playgroup facility increased, so did the danger of considerable attrition within the small sample. The time lag, as it transpired, was considerable and the fact that the attrition of the sample was so small (something just over 10%) was fortuitous. That the attrition which did occur did not in any way distort the distribution of the eventual groups was even more so.

Apart from external sources of possible error such as attrition due to Local Authority building delays, the study inevitably contained a number of inherent sources of error. The decision to base the main data collecting procedure on personal interviews opened up the possibility of interview bias, on the part of the interviewer.

In this study, there were two field workers, both women. This was probably an advantage in facilitating an easy relationship with mothers. One interviewer was young, in the same age range as most of the subjects; the other was middle-aged. This, too, had advantages in that mothers had a choice of two people they could talk to. Most did not mind which, but there were some who did; in such cases, where one interviewer failed, the other succeeded. From the point of view of response rate, this was rewarding. Even though all were told that it would take about one hour, only one person refused to be interviewed; and even she talked at some length on her doorstep on two occasions. From the point of view of bias, however, though difficult to define, there was obviously some pre-judging on the part of the respondents, of the field workers. Dress, no doubt, can produce bias; so too can age and sex, indeed almost everything about an interviewer. But there are probably no greater sources of error than those characteristics of which one is hardly aware - the inflection of the voice, a sudden glance or impatient gesture, a slip of the tongue. These can intrude in the interview and can bias the perception

of both respondent and interviewer. The influence of such reactions is much harder to detect and control than those sources of error which lie in the phrasing of a question or the leading word. These can often be brought to light in the evolutionary stages of a questionnaire, particularly where a team is working together. Another safeguard is, of course, the use of tapes and the practice of listening to all recordings, discussing them and reading transcriptions. This is not to ensure lack of bias, however; it has to be admitted that some degree of bias is inherent in the interview situation.

It is not only the interviewer who is responsible for this; the natural desire of most subjects is to please the interviewer. There is also the fact that many people are out to impress or, at the very least, not to show themselves ignorant or in a bad light. This may result in responses that are not strictly true, omissions or stereotype answers. It is really up to the interviewer to create an atmosphere of trust, entirely without censure or exaggerated reactions in any direction. In the context of an interview with a mother in her own home, she is on her own ground and is normally increasingly relaxed. It is usually possible, in a lengthy conversation, to build internal checks in the questionnaire, to return to points where one senses reluctance or overstatement. Some women were particularly sensitive about their husband's occupation, for example; it was better to leave this question until the need to impress had been dispelled, so that it was possible to find out what he really did, instead of being told he was an engineer, when 'handyman' was nearer the mark.

Sometimes questions are posed in areas where the interviewee has no views. When a person has not given an issue any thought, and is suddenly asked about it, the tendency is to make one up (Oppenheim, 1966). This situation was aptly illustrated by an incident during an interview; a friend of the mother was also present; after about 45 minutes, a market researcher rang the doorbell and in our hearing interviewed the mother about her use of certain products. Wnen she returned to the subject of pre-school provision, the friend interjected regarding the replies given on the doorstep. "You don't really use Brand X, do you? It's no bloody good, you know." "No, 'course I don't; but you've got to tell them something, haven't you?" (Pause) "I've never heard of it!"

There were, of course, a number of questions asked by the interviewers in the study, on topics that a proportion of mothers had almost certainly not thought about or about which they had no considered opinion. Questions as to the type of pre-school provision they would prefer, whether or not they would like meals provided or the facility to remain open in the school holidays fell into this category. One could encourage them to think aloud, discount the need for 'snap' answers or indeed any opinion.

It was necessary to explain the differences between the various alternative forms of provision and here again there was a source of bias. Verbal explanations ran the risks inherent in speech, of particular emphasis, or inadvertent cues; written explanations had to be presented in a certain order on a card (unless one juggled with a pack of alternatives) and this is known to give rise to bias (Hyman, 1954). There was the added hazard that some mothers could not read easily and were embarrassed by being asked to do so; this could not always be anticipated. Furthermore, there was the problem of attention span: even though mothers were highly motivated to talk about their children, an hour was a long time for some to concentrate. Some obviously found it easier than others, and this was another possible source of error. One ploy was to vary the 'activity' and administer the Grid and Rotter about halfway through; these involved ticking responses and afforded some variety and respite from speech.

As can be seen by the presence of the friend in the interview referred to above, no stipulation was made regarding the mother being on her own when interviewed. In the majority of cases, children were present and although this presented problems, the advantages of seeing mothers and children together far outweighed any difficulties. In some homes, friends were present,or parents, husbands, or in-laws. These were obviously 'variables' that could not easily be controlled and it was equally obvious that there were occasions when responses were inhibited by those present. In such cases, or where there were snippets of information that could not be coded and were not recorded as they came at the beginning or end of an interview, or where the interviewer had a 'hunch', then personal notes, made immediately after the interview, provided a useful check.

But even the most careful notes and shared understanding of coding between field workers, does not ensure that a situation or attitude can be accurately assessed. The same mother might give quite a different impression and set of responses from one time to another, depending on how she feels. Furthermore, a particular type of response might mean something completely different in the context of one family and the next. (Goldberg, 1964) In an examination of the problem of assessing family attitudes, Goldberg drew attention to the fact that a variable like the amount of contact and communication between spouses as an indicator of the soundness of the marriage was not necessarily good evidence, at least without some reference to "needs and expectations of the spouses". He showed, too, how one family might be fundamentally hostile to each other and full of tension, but be welded together by the need to conform, so that only a crisis would reveal the true nature of their relationships; similarly, another family might appear mutually aggressive and argumentative, subject to continual rows in public - and yet contained

fewer pathogenic factors than the first apparently united group.

The relevance of such observations to this study was clear. It drew attention to the need both for objective measuring devices and for training interviewers in understanding the psychological defence mechanisms operating in the interview. Field workers needed to be aware that such mechanisms applied both to themselves and respondents. The interaction could be subtle and different in every case. On one side, the purpose of an interview was clear; it was to establish rapport with the subject so that he or she would feel able to respond with ease and confidence, in a way natural to him- or herself. Each interviewee, however, had different needs and different expectations. Some respondents were welcoming; they opened the door wide at the first knock. Others eyed one defensively through a crack and kept the safety chain well in place. One possible technique was to say a set piece in all situations. This would certainly have reduced one source of bias. On the other hand, it would have increased the number of refusals and it would have been totally unrealistic in terms of one human being trying to communicate with another.

Quite clearly, from the moment of first eye contact, either consciously or unconsciously, the interviewer was seeking the most fruitful approach. But if one was tempted to assume a definitive role thought to be acceptable, and to vary it according to the 'client', then yet another source of error could arise.

One discipline which was found helpful in the present study derived from the 'listening' technique developed by Dr. Rachel Pinney (1963). Dr. Pinney's main concern was in the field of international communication. She observed that usually delegates came to a conference table with their minds made up, not only about what they were going to say, but also what their 'opponents' would say too. They spoke but did not listen. Her technique involved giving people practice not only in speaking - knowing that no one could interrupt or 'reply' - but also in listening. The person in the 'listening' role had no opportunity to reply; there was therefore no point in composing a contrary argument while the speaker developed his theme. The only task for the listener was to listen, to try to understand and to put himself imaginatively in the place of the speaker. This is a far more difficult discipline than might at first be supposed. Deliberate use of it in the interview situation has the merit of reducing the pitch of the exchange and promoting a passive role for the interviewer. Such an emphasis is particularly important where issues are being explored on which the interviewer may have definite ideas and opinions.

In human communication, there are inevitably problems of misinterpretation, gaps in understanding, a degree of unjustified 'in-filling' and

assumed response, as well as inherent bias. Nevertheless the danger of such bias can be minimised, by a careful evolutionary process of questionnaire or schedule. In this study these biases and errors were intended to be minimised by the use of a variety of instruments together with two field workers. Each instrument in some way provided a check on the other. Notes and tapes checked interviewer responses. Rotter provided a break from the tedium of question and answer responses and so acted as a check against stereotyped replies. The Saxby Grid checked certain areas of response in the schedule. Furthermore, the Rotter, as an objective measure, served to counter-balance the 'in-depth approach' of the semi-structured interviews. It required quick responses - it was the first reaction which counted, as opposed to greater thought and consideration encouraged in the interview.

Finally, and perhaps most important, was the degree of consultation among the research team. Given the well-defined area and sample and a closely-knit team, it was possible for discussion and analysis to benefit from group interaction, and this may have been one of the key checks against bias in the study.

CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER VI

The proposed scheme and its locality

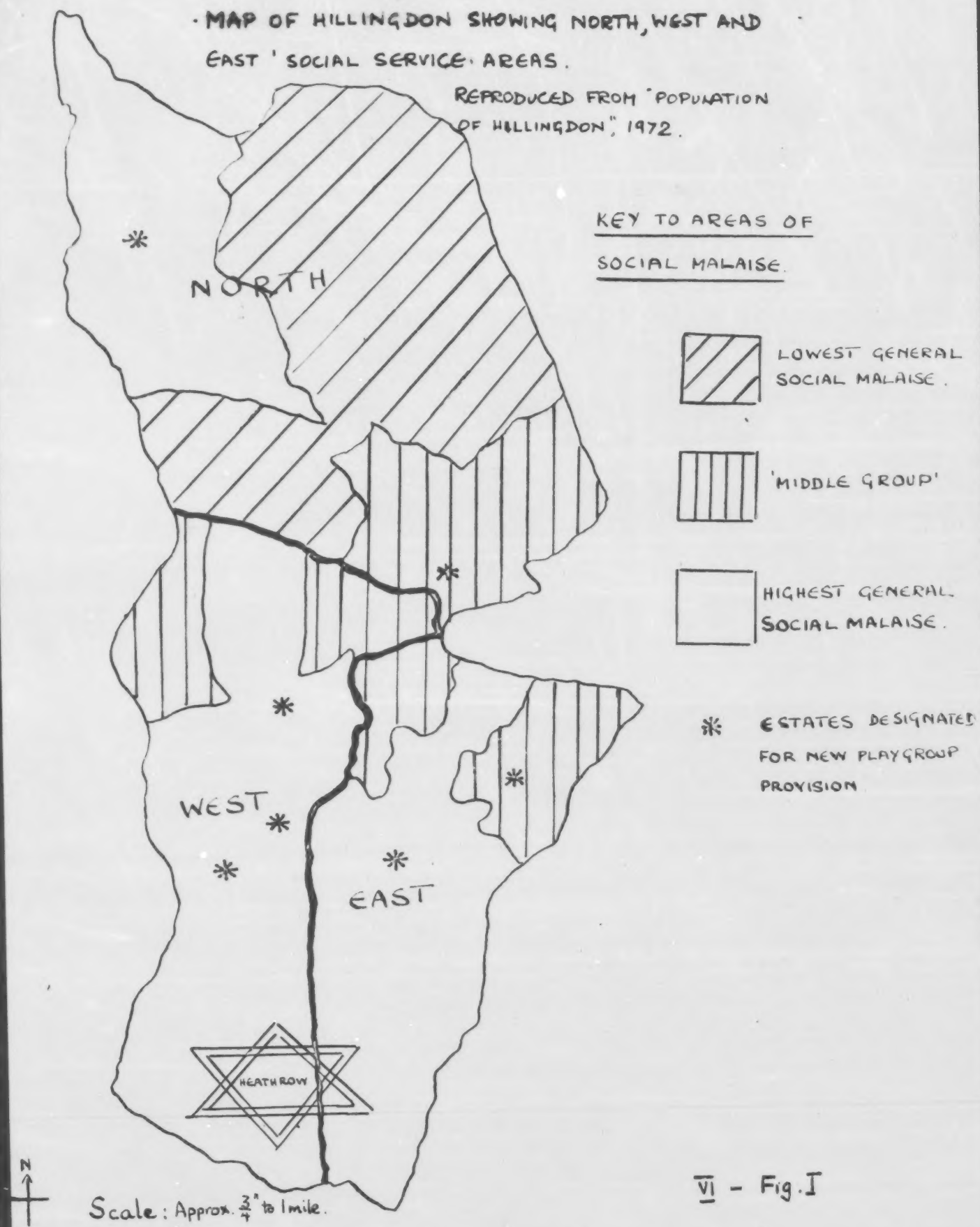
The Borough of Hillingdon lies due west of the metropolis and is the third largest in Greater London; it covers an area of some 42 square miles and is roughly rectangular in shape from north to south. The northern sector is predominantly residential and middle class, with several golf-courses, green-belt woodland and common land, while the south is more densely populated and more industrialised. The total population, according to the 1971 census, was 234,220. As can be seen from the map (figure 1), the southernmost tip is completely dominated by London's Heathrow airport. The Borough is divided into three social service areas, north, west and east; these more or less follow ward boundaries. In relation to other boroughs in Greater London, all wards in Hillingdon rank among the top three of twelve categories of social status (G.L.C. Research Report, No. 13, July 1971). By comparison with other parts of London, therefore, Hillingdon would seem both prosperous and homogeneous.

When comparison between the northern and sourthern parts of the Borough is made without reference to other boroughs, however, the differences assume greater proportions (The Population of Hillingdon, November 1972). In the northern area, there are relatively more middle-aged and elderly people, a large proportion of whom live alone; there is a marked concentration of 'professional workers' and managers. The total population (1966 Census) was 87,500. In contrast, the west and east areas, which together are comparable in size with the north, carry a total population of 141,250. Here, almost half the dwellings are rented, mainly from the Local Authority. There are proportionately more children, more large families, more overcrowded accommodation and fewer basic amenities. Indices extracted from research projects reported by the Hillingdon Social Services Research Section showed that the east and west areas, as compared with the north, had fewer playgroups, more children admitted into care, and greater relative incidence of mental and physical handicap and higher infant mortality rates.

In 1973, pre-school provision in the Borough comprised two nursery schools, ten nursery classes, four day nurseries and approximately eighty playgroups. One nursery school was situated in an area of middling social malaise (see Figure 1) and the other in an area of highest malaise. 90% of nursery classes were in this same category and were concentrated in one area. A survey of playgroup provision in the Borough (Soc. Serv. Res. Sect., May 1972) showed that in the Borough as a whole, there was playgroup provision for one child in four, aged three to four, but that existing provision (75 playgroups) was concentrated in the more middle class areas. There were considerable difficulties in making an accurate assessment of demand; it was found, for example, that waiting lists were totally

· MAP OF HILLINGDON SHOWING NORTH, WEST AND EAST 'SOCIAL SERVICE' AREAS.

REPRODUCED FROM "POPULATION OF HILLINGDON", 1972.



VI - Fig. I

unsatisfactory criteria, as many parents put their names down on several lists at the same time. But it was thought that expense involved, travelling difficulties and unawareness of the existence of facilities restricted development of playgroups. One explanation of the variation between areas was that there was "less awareness of the role of playgroups in those areas where they had not sprung up". An alternative explanation was that "social, economic and practical difficulties had so far restricted their growth". There was no doubt that one of the chief practical difficulties was lack of premises. (Survey of Playgroups, Soc. Serv. Res. 1972)

Two occurrences coincided with this Survey and combined to bring about the decision to place custom-built playgroup units on Council estates in areas of special need. One was a request from a tenants' association for the use of a flat for a playgroup. This highlighted the need for such provision together with the willingness of tenants' associations to take the initiative. The other was the unexpected availability of a substantial sum of money which could be used for such a purpose.

A working party was set up to identify areas of special need; that is, where there was a high concentration of children and no pre-school provision. After consultation with the local branch of the Pre-school Playgroups Association, seven estates were chosen, each with an active tenants' association. As the Council anticipated that tenants' associations would take responsibility for overall organisation and that a special committee would be formed to run playgroups, the existence of an association was a pre-requisite for implementing the scheme. It was also recognised that advice and guidance in setting up such playgroups would be necessary. Accordingly, in December 1972, a Borough Playgroup Adviser and an Assistant, both full-time, were appointed. At the same time, the Director of Social Services, the Council's Research Department and social workers and advisers concerned, offered to provide facilities for a study team from Brunel University to monitor the introduction of these units.

General Description of the Estates

With the exception of one small estate in the rural part of the Borough to the north, the estates were concentrated in the southern, more industrial and less favoured areas, within a few miles of each other. Yet there were obvious differences between them: in size, they ranged from 75 dwellings to almost 500; in design, one was built round a central green space, others were scattered and included high rise blocks, terraced houses and separate flats for the elderly. In others, old people were spread throughout the estate in one-bedroomed flats between family flats. Some estates had green lawns planted with trees between blocks, others gave

the impression of a 'concrete jungle'. A few flats had tiny gardens for tenants on the ground floors, but in the majority, design was open plan. The larger estates had shops - a grocer, butcher, newsagent, tobacconist and launderette, or just one supermarket. The smallest estate was separated from the main shopping centre by busy narrow roads with inadequate pedestrian way. In some, the primary school appeared integrated, in others, physically divorced.

There was, then, external architectural diversity. But in common was the fact that all estates were comparatively new; they had been built within the past five years and reflected a progressive and imaginative housing policy. Internal design showed similar variety, but it was all focussed on improved living conditions. There was no overcrowding, as Council policy was to re-house families where there were two children of different sex, once the younger had reached the age of one year. This particular facet of housing policy, not unique to Hillingdon, nevertheless formed a significant feature in the study being reported here and will be discussed again later.

Most tenants had been on the local housing register, but a proportion (approximately 25%) were re-housed from Inner London. The majority, therefore, came from local families and had grown up in an area which had developed from an agricultural community dominated by small holdings, market gardens and brick manufacturing. Transport systems which crossed the area - notably canals, brought many changes, including the introduction of new industries. More recently, the network of main roads, railways and particularly London's Heathrow Airport, had brought rapid developments and opportunity for employment. There was now a 26 acre industrial estate and an increasing number of firms including electrical engineering, electronics, aircraft, food products and a wide range of manufacturing and processing companies. Married women in employment (both full-time and part-time) constituted nearly a quarter of the work force (The Population of Hillingdon, November 1972). But although there was opportunity for both full- and part-time work for women, the number of part-time jobs that would fit in with school hours was limited.

General Amenities and Transport Serving Estates

There was access by bus and train from all parts to excellent shopping centres at Uxbridge and Slough, as well as train services to central London from Uxbridge and West Drayton. The Borough was well endowed with open spaces, mainly in the northern part; but was also close to the countryside of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, which was easily reached by car and public transport.

Facilities for all kinds of sport were excellent; they included a large sports stadium, swimming baths and even indoor skiing. Local libraries offered a comprehensive service, with separate rooms or sections for younger readers

and 'story times' for mothers and young children.

Social amenities, health and recreational facilities compared favourably with many other London Boroughs. Housing conditions were good. The possibility of a playgroup situated on an estate, within easy walking distance of all families, constituted yet another "much needed facility".

Notification of the Tenants' Associations

In July/August, 1972, tenants' associations of the seven selected estates were notified by letter of the Council's proposed scheme. Response was slow - by October, only two had replied with enthusiasm. One of these had made the original request for use of a flat for a playgroup. Two associations refused the offer on the grounds that there was no demand/room for the provision. One estate was found not to have a tenants' association; the offer was subsequently extended to another association which later accepted the proposal.

The Borough Advisers began work in January 1973. Soon afterwards, a series of meetings was arranged on five estates to explain and discuss the scheme. Initially, these were informal meetings with the committees of tenants' associations concerned. All meetings were also attended by the investigator.

Tenants' Associations

Associations representing residents on the estates, showed considerable variation. In origin, most of them had been 'grouse groups', formed to represent tenants' interests, particularly complaints, to the Council. They had been in existence for periods ranging from a few months to four years; they all had a constitution, chairman, secretary, treasurer and committee elected annually. It appeared that men and women were equally represented on them; one had a woman chairman.

Some associations were in quite a delicate financial situation. Others were well established and widely supported. As early difficulties and teething troubles had been dealt with, attention had shifted from complaints about damp and refuse disposal, to organising social activities and problems of minority groups, particularly senior citizens and teenagers. Some associations enjoyed a very good relationship with the Council and individual councillors; in others, feelings generated by their origins of 'us' and 'them' seemed to linger on. They all considered themselves 'strong' associations. In the case of the most recently formed, it was stated that they saw themselves as innovators, who recognised the value of the Council's scheme and were prepared to push it even though tenants as a whole might seem apathetic. In other estates, it was clearly a question of associations

representing actual demand and views of tenants, rather than taking initiative on their behalf.

The Proposal

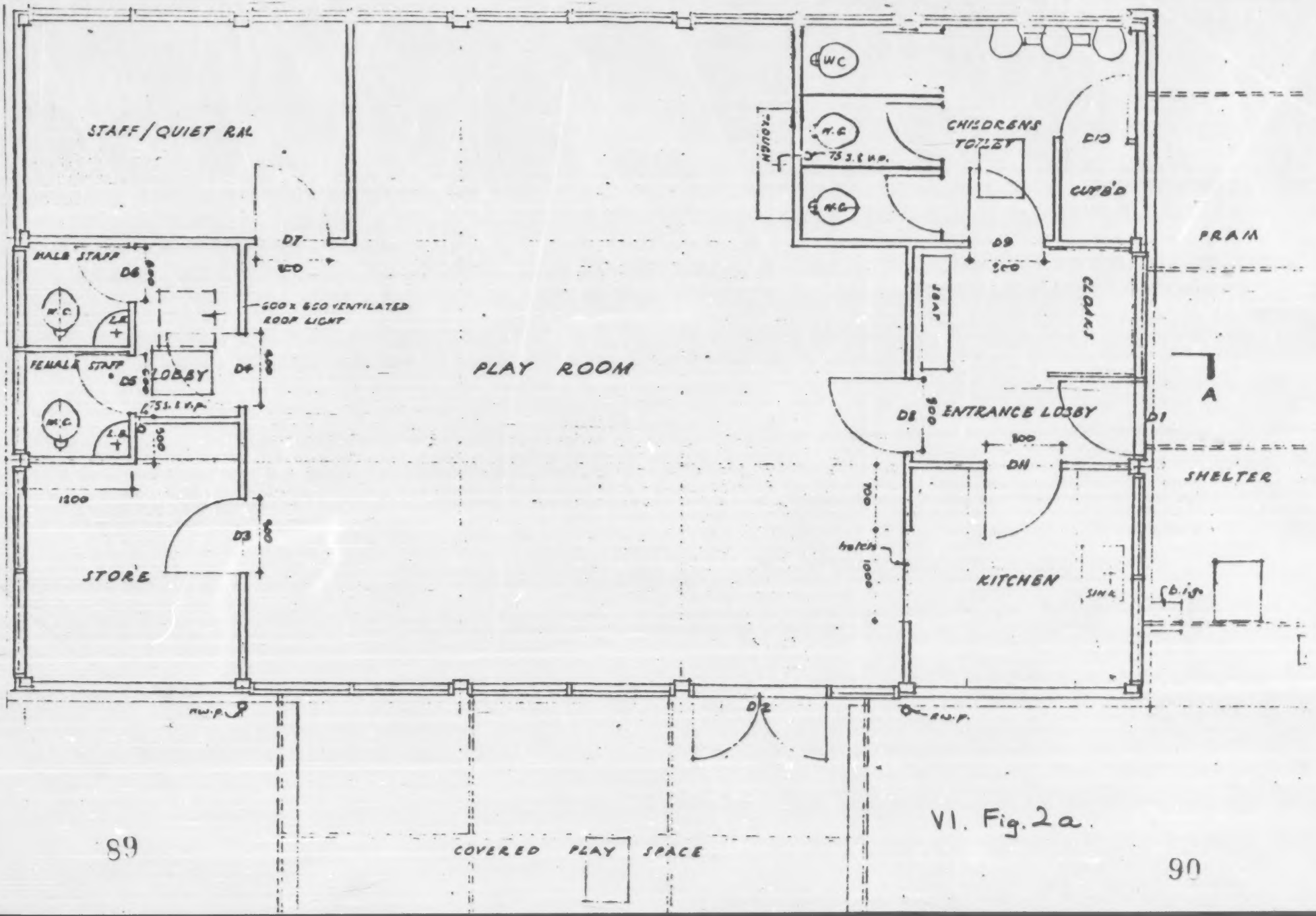
At each preliminary meeting with the tenants' association committees, the Playgroup Adviser, representing the Council, explained that the Housing Committee was offering a Terrapin building (first estimated at a cost of £3,000, later rising to £11,30?) to be placed on the estate in a situation mutually satisfactory to Council and tenants. These units had been specially designed for use as a playgroup with large, low windows on one side which gave access to a covered playspace and a small fenced area of grass and trees. Doors on one side of the room led to a storage room, a staff or 'quiet' room and staff cloakrooms; on the opposite side was a kitchen equipped to provide refreshment but not hot meals. There was also a lobby with access to the side of the building and children's cloakrooms and toilets. The playroom was to be equipped with a large, low-level sink and water supply; it was designed to be partitioned off into play corners. The lower part of the walls was to be clad in a special soft, gaily coloured board which could be used for hanging pictures, paintings and collages at child height. Safety was a special feature of these units; heating was principally by an electric under-floor system and windows were of 'unbreakable' material (Figure 2, a and b).

Organisation

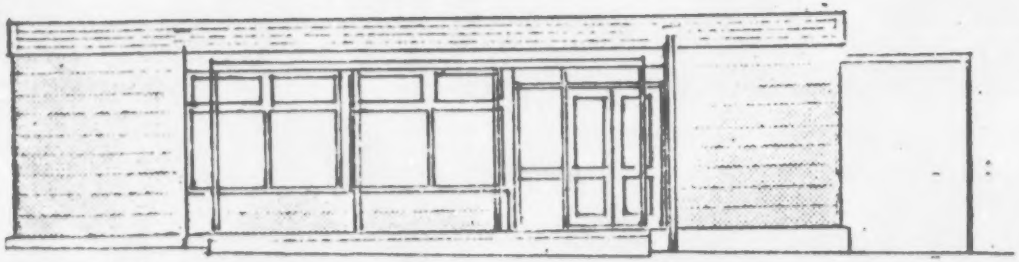
It was anticipated that tenants' associations would take overall responsibility for buildings. They would arrange for a meeting of mothers with young children and a playgroup committee would be formed. It would appoint a chairman, secretary and treasurer and at least two committee members. This committee would be responsible for the day to day running of the groups, appointment of a trained supervisor and assistant and a rota of mother helpers. Practical help and support would be available both from the local branch of the Pre-school Playgroups Association and especially from Borough Advisers. It was stressed that once the building was in situ, playgroups belonged to the community and would be 'theirs'.

Finance

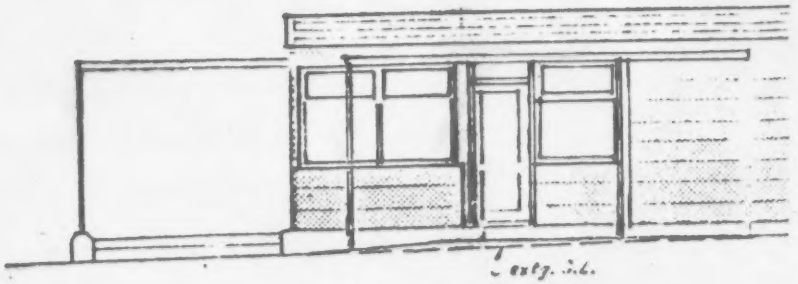
No rent would be charged by the Council; free heating and general maintenance would be provided, tenants' associations being responsible for replacement of small items (e.g. electric light bulbs) and for cleaning. In addition, the Council would make an initial grant for basic playgroup equipment, but tenants would be


STAFF/QUIET RM
WC
W.C
CHILDRENS TOILET
D10
CUPB'D
PRAM
HALL STAFF
D6
D7
D9
SOAP
CLOAKS
600 x 600 VENTILATED ROOF LIGHT
PLAY ROOM
FEMALE STAFF
D5
LOBBY
D4
L.S.
D8
ENTRANCE LOBBY
D1
A
D11
SHELTER
1200
D3
STORE
hatch
KITCHEN
SINK
D.I.S.
D2
COVERED PLAY SPACE

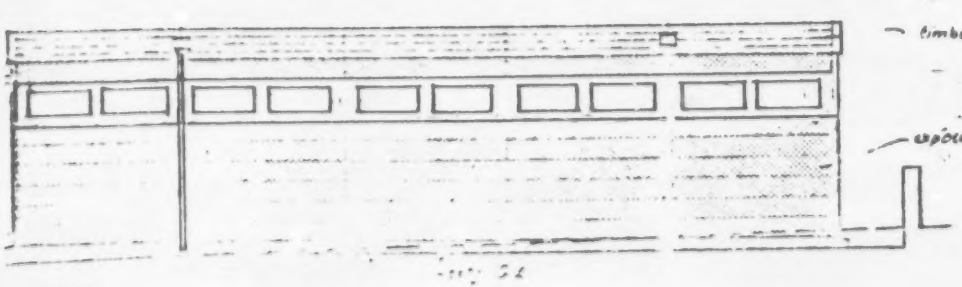
VI. Fig. 2a.



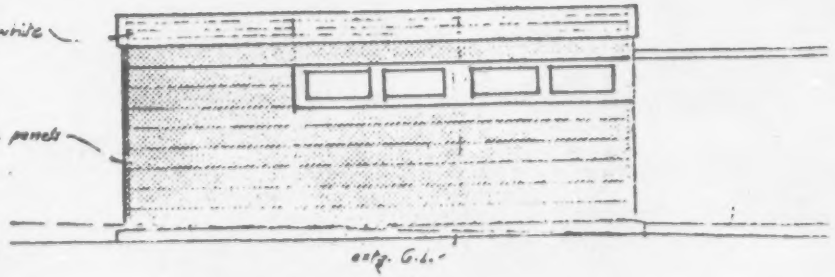
SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

encouraged to raise additional funds for specific apparatus. The grant was first stated to be £200, but as building costs spiralled, it finally amounted to approximately £100. Equipment was to be purchased by the Adviser in consultation with playgroup committees; it would comprise basic items - small tables and chairs, easels and paint pots, clay, pencils, paper, scissors, bricks, jigsaws and woodwork bench.

The Council wanted fees charged to be as low as possible; 15p a session was thought a realistic sum. Other 'independent' playgroups in Hillingdon charged from 25-35p, so this was a substantial reduction on the norm. With 20 children attending per session, the playgroups' total income (per session) would be in the region of £3. The suggested rate of pay for supervisors was £1.25 and for assistants, 75p for a three hour session. It was therefore intended that £2 would go to staff and £1 would remain for overheads, e.g. cleaning, minor repairs, replacement of equipment.

Catchment Area

The Council expected that playgroups would cater for estate and for non-estate children where these fell within the catchment area of the local primary school or were within reasonable distance of the amenity. The anticipated ratio of estate to non-estate children was in the region of 75:25%.

Use of Premises

If tenants' associations wished to use premises for purposes other than a playgroup, application would have to be made on each occasion to the Council. It was unlikely that youth activities would be permitted, but small committee meetings, those for senior citizens, mother and toddler clubs or opportunity classes for handicapped children would be encouraged.

Reactions

Reactions to these proposals varied. Two associations had refused the preliminary offer; five followed it up with further discussions and finally accepted the scheme.

Principal considerations militating against acceptance were:-

1. Lack of sympathy with the idea of pre-school provision on the part of individual committee members who had no young children of their own.
2. Fear that a group of young children would be a nuisance, especially for the old and night or shift workers who lived near the building.
3. Concern at the degree of responsibility involved. Perhaps some committees were not secure financially and were wary of undertaking something that might become

a liability; others were more concerned with the economic viability of the proposal.

4. The view, voiced in all but one committee, that the responsibility of the association was to tenants on the estate and did not include running a playgroup for the"benefit of families living off it"; there was opposition to anything which might encourage children from outside to come and play on their 'territory'. "We have enough of our own", summed up their view to the prospect having other children coming to the estate.

5. The conviction, in one committee only, that there was no call for such provision and that apathy was such that the scheme could not succeed. Subsequent events suggest that this was mainly a reflection of personalities (see 1, p.6).

6. Some associations found it difficult to accept the Council's proviso that premises would not be available for general community purposes. Tenants were aware of the needs of older children and teenagers, for whom "there was nothing" on the estate, and blamed much prevalent vandalism on this. Pre-schooling was low on the list of priorities.

7. Problems arising from siting. Practical considerations were paramount; siting was not always as straightforward as it seemed to the layman. What, to a committee of tenants, might seem an obvious place for a playgroup, might involve considerable difficulty and unlooked for expense for the Council in providing services; if the preferred site from the economic and practical point of view encroached on green space where older children usually played, then a building that would further restrict them was unwelcome.

8. Criticism of the proposed provision on the grounds that "mothers who go out to work want something different", was voiced on one committee. This may also have been a reflection of point 1.

9. The subsidised charge of 15p per session was generally accepted as very reasonable. The sum paid to the supervisor and her assistant was usually accepted, but not without comment. Remuneration was considered poor in relation to the responsibility taken by the supervisor, the training she had received and the time she would have to spend in preparation outside playgroup hours. In three out of five committees where women had been interested to apply for the post of supervisor, the view was expressed that for those wages, it "wasn't worth the candle", and they would not apply.

So general reaction ranged from enthusiasm for a "fantastic" and "extra-ordinary offer", "just what we need", to a more grudging response that "if that was what the Council was determined to do, they might as well go along with it" - but with reservations! To the observer, the outstanding feature of these committees was the degree to which acceptance or rejection hinged on the personalities

within the groups and particularly, the vital role played by the chairmen. A skilful chairman, who was aware of the scheme's potential, could ensure that all concerns were voiced, but see that they were dealt with in a constructive fashion; those who found it easy to speak were not allowed to dominate meetings at the expense of the less articulate. It was equally evident that where a chairman felt strongly either way, he was in a position to exert undue influence. What emerged with great clarity were differences existing between one community and the next, even in the same locality. To the superficial eye, they appeared very much the same, but each had a distinct 'feel' and was aware of different needs and different priorities.

"Hillcroft"

This, the estate which was the subject of the study in depth, had made the original request to the Council for use of a flat as a playgroup. The tenants' association was very active and concerned with the welfare of the residents in all age groups. It dealt, not only with grievances among tenants, but organised numerous social events and circulated regular newsletters. The following excerpts from two consecutive numbers indicated that the Association was extremely enthusiastic and appreciative of the playgroup project and considered there was great need for such provision.

"What is a playgroup? Well it's not just a place for Mums just to dump their children. It is a place where children can mix with other youngsters and do creative play under trained supervision. It is generally accepted that the child who has been to a playgroup settles into school easier than a child who has not. In fact playgroups only started in the early 1960's. They are for three to five year olds and the Mums are encouraged to help in all aspects of the group.

Some people are still saying "there won't be enough room for my child in the playgroup". THERE WILL BE!

There will be three sessions per week for the four year olds and two sessions per week for the three year olds. So when forms are distributed, fill in your child's name there and then!"

"We have purchased the following for the playgroup - tables and chairs, crayons, paints, paper, brushes, gum, easels, paste and some constructional toys. We do, of course, need much more indoor and outdoor equipment, as the playgroup is far from being equipped in the way we would like.....

Plans are being made to hold an Open Evening shortly before the playgroup begins, giving all those interested an opportunity to view the building

and to get an idea of the activities the playgroup will offer. Activities will include free play, painting, simple handwork, music and movement, action verses and singing games. Numbers and colours are also included.

We are happy to report that £25.87 np. was raised in our very first raffle and thank all who supported us."

The estate was completed in 1969; built of pre-cast concrete, blocks of three storey flats were arranged in a series of 'closes'. Each block had a central staircase which served three flats on each floor; the middle flat in every case was one bed-roomed and intended for the elderly. These had small private balconies. Flats on either side were two bedroomed family flats; their balconies were not enclosed but rather formed part of a 'landing' at the top of each stairway.

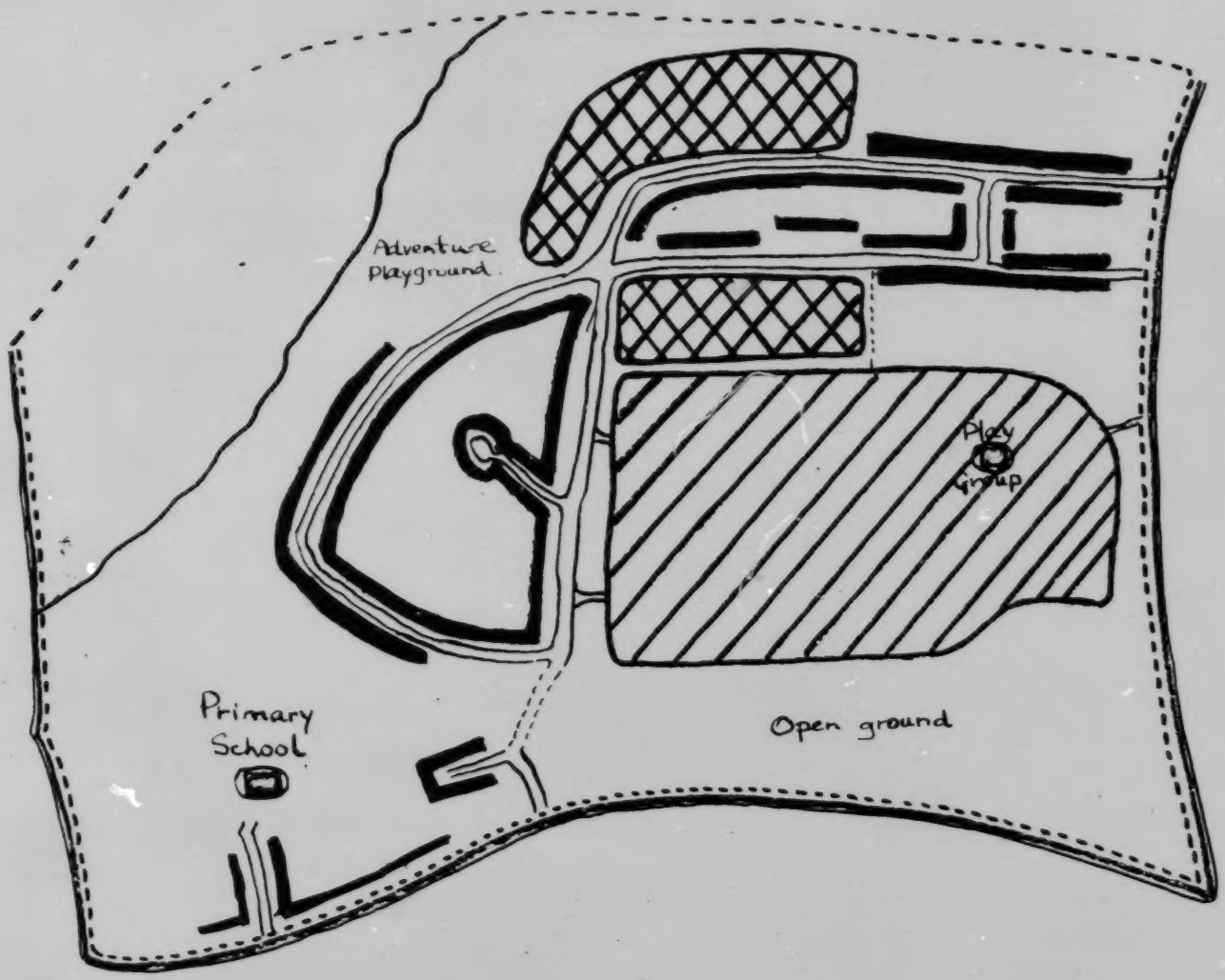
All family flats were built to the same basic design. An L-shaped entrance gave access to one double and one single bedroom, a bathroom and separate lavatory. There was a large, well-proportioned sitting/living room and a connecting door to a kitchen/diner. This was light, airy and well-fitted. Central heating was provided by storage radiators in bedrooms and hot air in sitting rooms. Other amenities included universal provision of an electric clothes drier, waste chutes for refuse disposal and 'pram' sheds at ground level for tenants in upper floors. There were ample parking and garage facilities.

In the centre of each 'close' was an ornamental area, partially enclosed by low brick walls, irregularly placed, and planted inside with trees and shrubs. There were also a few saplings at intervals on the open geen spaces between blocks of flats. Central to the estate was a small hard play area, with a rusty old engine and a few swings. During the year or more in which the estate was regularly visited by the field workers, this was always littered with broken glass and was totally unsuitable for under-fives. Close to the estate on some open ground, the Council had recently opened an Adventure Playground, but this was not intended for younger children. Safety of external playspace for under-fives varied. Children living in flats close to roads which connected garages or linked supermarket and flats with adjoining main roads were particularly at risk, as there was no enclosed outside playspace.

A well-stocked supermarket was sited in the centre of the estate, close to the children's play area and the rent office. Prices compared favourably with those in the nearest shopping centre, about ten minutes walk away. Here there were several supermarkets, a good selection of small shops, library and post office, clinic and Citizens' Advice Bureau, together with bus and train routes. Behind the main shopping street lay a small recreation field and park. There was

Map showing catchment area of playgroup and type of housing.

VI. Fig.3.



Main roads

Boundary of Catchment Area.

New Estate

Older flats

1952 estate of terraced houses.

Detached private houses.

no cinema in the locality and most noticeable on the estate itself, no community hall; there were, however, two licensed social clubs and a number of pubs within walking distance. But apart from the British Legion, there was no social centre where parents could go with their young children.

Physical needs then were catered for in that there was opportunity for employment, good accommodation, excellent clinic and hospital provision and accessible social amenities. Some institutions which might have helped to draw people into community life were too far away to play any significant part, although some churches were nearby. There were, for example, a number of Irish families who were practising Catholics and expressed regret that their church was over half an hour's walk away; they found they just could not join in other activities while their children were young. Although not inaccessible, therefore, the estate nevertheless gave the impression of being 'cut off' from the larger community life and yet not to have developed a community life of its own. But in spite of the efforts of the tenants' association, there was no well developed sense of identity on the estate.

In some recent developments, there has been a tendency for schools to become a centre for community involvement. The local primary school was opened in March, 1969, and had a total population approximately 100 children in a one stream entry, divided into three infant classes. Children were "vertically grouped", that is , each class included children of five, six and seven. The school was designed so that each classroom had an 'outward looking' door. In this way easy access for parents was facilitated; parents were welcome at the school and there were special times, for example, mid-morning, when it was known teachers would be available. It had been found that since parents were free to come at any time, there was no undue pressure on staff. Prior to a child's entry every parent would be contacted by letter, although it was usually they who made the first approach. Everybody was invited to the school to meet the teachers, and parents did support open evenings and school activities. It was the school's experience, however, that formal parent-teacher associations did not work, as they catered for and appealed to, only the type of person who was able to cope with a formal situation. The headmaster was very sensitive to the problems of young, non-academic families with all the tensions of flat/close living and recognised the fact that a proportion of them were "terrified to come up to school". But a school such as this, however good its relationship with parents, does not reach those with pre-school children; there was no centre for young parents, with children under five.

Catchment Area

The catchment area of the proposed playgroup was defined as that of the local primary school (Figure 3). This meant that in addition to the new estate, another area of older council housing was included. This property was built about 1952 and comprised semi-detached and terraced houses in red brick; each had an enclosed garden. The 'estate' had a modern look about it and generally gave the impression of being well-tended. There were also eight blocks of older flats built on three floors and separated from each other by green open spaces. Each of these flats had a tiny enclosed garden where washing could be hung and children could play. The only private housing was a small development of detached houses in a cul de sac near the school.

Existing Pre-school Provision

There was no pre-school provision in the immediate area. The nearest nursery class was attached to the primary school in an adjacent 'catchment area'. In cases of very special need, children from the area of the present study might be allowed to attend; but pressure for places was extremely high. Day nursery facilities were available in similar circumstances, and attendance might mean up to a thirty minute walk for the mother. It would also be necessary to walk between fifteen and thirty minutes to reach the three nearest playgroups, which also had long waiting lists.

"Hillcroft" fell in the social service area which generated a much higher proportion of children in care cases than would be expected on the basis of relative population size.

Table VI

Position of Children in Care between Social Service Areas

	Total	% of Total	Number per 1000 Enumerated Population
North	1,524	36.3	16.3
West	1,562	37.2	19.3
East	1,113	26.2	15.4

from London Borough of Hillingdon; Social Services Research, May, 1974.

Its particular ward accounted for the highest number of cases (110) - ten times more than in the lowest ward. Short-term illness/convalescence of parents appeared to be the major single reason for admission to care; the average age of children was five years nine months (Analysis of Children in Care, 1965-71, Hillingdon Social Services Report, 1972). It is only fair to say, however, that both social work area and ward included estates outside the catchment area of "Hillcroft's" primary school, and that these seemed to give more concern to social workers than "Hillcroft" itself.

This then was the backcloth against which development of the new playgroup took place. The Tenants' Association publicised a series of meetings for tenants, when the proposals were explained more fully and the decision made to go ahead.

The Association and the playgroup Adviser convened an informal meeting for mothers at which she explained that a constitution was necessary; she recommended the form suggested by the Pre-school Playgroups Association. This laid down the object of the group as the "provision of safe and satisfying play for three to five year olds". The Playgroup committee would have power to hire premises, provide equipment, engage staff, admit children and charge fees, as well as do all that might be necessary in the running of the playgroup. Membership would be open to all parents whose children attended and to others who were interested. The committee was to retire each year but could be re-elected.

It was evident that there was some reluctance on the part of mothers to 'take office'. However, the Adviser had created a pleasantly informal atmosphere and went on to explain more fully what was involved, which dispelled much of the uncertainty. Eight mothers volunteered to serve on the committee and at a subsequent meeting, a chairman, secretary and treasurer were elected. This committee threw itself into fund raising and gathering of equipment with great enthusiasm. Fathers too were involved in making and repairing toys.

The role of the Borough Adviser was crucial; she was able to offer guidance in choice of equipment and in the type of toy the playgroup would need. She established excellent relations, both with the Tenants' Association and with individual mothers, combining a business-like, forward-looking procedure with an informal and supportive approach. Her role assumed even greater importance due to building delays and consequent disappointments which dogged the project. It was inevitable that even where there was great enthusiasm, initial interest and involvement was eroded by frustration in the absence of any visible signs of progress. In an increasingly depressing situation, when one hold-up followed another, she organised meetings for mothers in their own homes. On these occasions, there was an opportunity to discuss aspects of playgroup practice and a chance to handle and talk about material and equipment before the playgroup opened. Such meetings also enabled

misunderstandings to be cleared up before they reached serious proportions. One example was the situation which developed after the building schedule had been seriously delayed yet again. As a result, the playgroup committee had acute storage problems with equipment already collected. Arrangements were made through the Adviser for it to be stored in an empty garage on the estate, for which another Council department proceeded to charge the Tenants' Association £1.00 per week. This was a considerable and unlooked-for drain on their financial resources and was the sort of expense that had been feared by some opponents of the scheme. Concern was voiced at one of the mothers' meetings and the error rectified by the intervention of a councillor. Constant support of this kind from both the Adviser and those councillors who were specially concerned in the project, managed to keep interest alive and the committee together during a difficult eight month period.

One of the first tasks for the committee was the appointment of a supervisor; the delays also affected this exercise, as the person they first chose was unable to wait for the job to materialise, although as a member of the Tenants' Association and the Mothers' Committee, she worked very hard for the success of the playgroup. The supervisor who was subsequently chosen, lived on a neighbouring estate; she was friendly with many of the committee mothers and had a four year old son whom she brought with her to the playgroup. A trained librarian, she had also taken the Pre-school Playgroup Association supervisor's course.

The playgroup committee and the Tenants' Association were also closely concerned with publicising the new playgroup. Regular monthly Tenants' Association newsletters were delivered to all tenants on the estate and these carried details of the project as it progressed. The Association was responsible for putting these through doors, one person being responsible for a particular block. In addition, 850 poster/handbills were printed at Brunel University, and were a direct intervention by the study team to ensure blanket coverage of information. Design was a joint effort of the field workers and the committee; handbills were large, 16" x 12", printed in black on pink paper. Headed by a 'smiley face', details were given of the proposed new playgroup; a tear-off slip at the bottom was designed to give particulars of children whose parents wished to put them on the waiting list and was to be returned to the 'Registration Secretary' who lived on the estate. Her address and the name, address and telephone number of the supervisor were included, together with an invitation to call and see her. Distribution of these handbills through the door of every house and flat in the catchment area (N = 789) was carried out by a small team of mothers working with and closely supervised by the field workers. Although it was known by the field workers where families with young children lived,

policy was to provide blanket coverage and to put handbills through every door. In addition, they were displayed in the local Post Office, the estate Rent Office and supermarket, and two supermarkets in the High Street, two local sweet shops and newsagents, Boots the Chemist, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and the launderette. The clinic refused to show them as it was "not accepted policy to display other than clinic notices". There were several articles and references in the local press regarding playgroups, but no specific advertisement inserted by the study team. Another aspect of publicity was the preliminary door to door survey carried out by the two field workers in the entire catchment area shortly before handbills were delivered. The purpose was to establish where there were families with children under five, but information about the proposed provision was given by way of introduction.

Response to publicity was slower than had been anticipated by the Committee and the Tenants' Association. About 15 mothers responded straight away and numbers built up only slowly to 35 within a couple of months. It is possible, however, that some evidence of building in progress would have evoked more interest. Posters announced an opening in June, 1973. In the event, the doors of the new pre-school provision did not open until February, 1974, a delay of eight months.

CHAPTER VI

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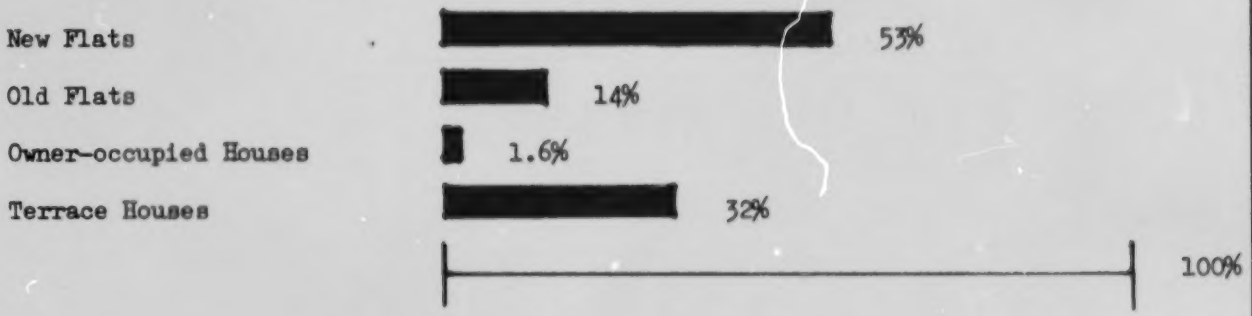
CHAPTER VII

"Hillcroft" - general characteristics of the sample

"Hillcroft", that is, the catchment area of both the local primary school and the new playgroup, as has already been shown included four distinct types of housing, mainly council owned (Chapter VI, figure 3).

Bar Chart VII: 1

Percentage of Each Type of Dwelling in "Hillcroft"



Estimates of the number of children under five in "Hillcroft" varied considerably, particularly those of the Health and Education Departments. The map used by the latter had been made before the new estate was built; this was the area where, as reference to the last column in Table VII: 2 below shows, most of the families with young children lived and these were therefore omitted in that estimate.

The Tenants' Association on the 'new estate' had also carried out their own survey. It was estimated that 266 under fives lived in the new flats and "thought" that there could be well over 1,000 in the catchment area ("Hillcroft"). In view of the discrepancies, it was decided to do a preliminary survey to pinpoint families with under fives. Two interviewers took part, using a brief questionnaire, the main objective of which was to establish the whereabouts of families with children 0 - 5 and to determine whether they already made use of any pre-school provision (Appendix VII: 1).

The method was to call at each of the 729 dwellings comprising "Hillcroft" until information was obtained; to explain that the survey was being made because new provision would shortly be available and, as an independent body, we wished to find out from parents how far it would be likely to meet their needs. We hoped to talk to some parents again in greater depth and would they be willing to help?

This preliminary survey was carried out between 11th and 22nd June, 1973 - one interviewer worked full-time and a second, part-time, including

evening visits. Ten families refused information out of a total of 729; the response rate was therefore 98.6%. It was nevertheless known from neighbours which of these non co-operating families had young children and they were included in the final sample, as it was felt that these were potentially among the most important respondents and a further attempt should be made to reach them.

Table VII: 2

Age Groupings of Children and Type of Housing

	Ages of Children						
Type of housing	12 months and under	1.1 - 2.4	2.5 - 3.0	3.1 - 4.0	4.1 - 5.0	Total	%
New flats N = 387	33	39	12	39	47	170	77.9
Old flats N = 100	4	7	2	2	3	18	8.2
Terrace houses N = 230	6	5	4	8	5	28	12.8
Owner-occupied flats N = 12	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.9
Total N = 729	43	51	18	50	56	218	100.0
%	20	23	8	23	26	100	

The table shows that families with young children were concentrated in the new flats (apparently Council housing policy) - 78%. Approximately one quarter (22%) of under fives lived off the new estate and only 13% lived in houses with an enclosed garden or outdoor play space. It seemed that the majority of people living in houses had moved in during the early 1950's, when their own children were young, and they had already brought up their families. Statements like, "there are no children under five here", were sometimes apparently belied by the appearance of a toddler, but these were grandchildren "visiting". The few families with young children were recent arrivals or living with parents or in-laws. The type of response most frequently encountered was, "You won't find no young 'uns here abouts - you'd best go over there" (indicating the new estate): there was a noticeable

number of gratuitous comments implying that people in the new flats came from London, or at least "not from round here", had a lot of children and were "rough". There was clearly a division in the minds of some people who lived off the new estate as to the 'status' of the two communities.

It was decided to interview in depth all those mothers with children who were three and under five in September, 1973. This excluded the rising fives who would be starting school in September. The total number of families left in this category, i.e. eligible for immediate attendance at the playgroup, was 88, and included six out of the ten mothers who had refused in the preliminary survey. The remaining four of the ten mothers had only children under three, so did not meet the criteria for interviewing. The field workers interviewed 87 out of the possible 88 mothers in their own homes; one mother was always "too busy", but talked on the doorstep for 20 minutes on two occasions. She was classed as the one refusal. Administration of the schedule took approximately one hour; interviews lasted about one hour and a half, including preliminaries, cups of coffee and diversions arising from the presence of young children.

Table VII: 3

Location and Number of Families Interviewed in Main Study

	Main Estate (New flats)	Older Estate (Houses)	Older Flats	Private Houses	Total
Number of families	70 (1)	8	7	2	87 (1)
% of total	80.4	9.1	8.0	2.2	100

Total number of mothers with three and four year old children 88
Total number interviewed 87
Response rate 98.6%

After a period of initial suspicion, mothers were helpful and responsive. Even those who had slammed the door or refused to talk in the preliminary survey were welcoming once they began to know and trust the interviewers. All those who had at first refused to co-operate, were reached. It appeared that the main reason for reluctance to answer the door to casual callers was the heavy pressure by door to door salesmen to which the new estate in particular had been subject since its earliest days. The high incidence of freezers possibly testified to such

activities. At the time of the main survey, it was found that 'students' were also ostensibly "doing a survey on children for a university course". They were really selling encyclopaedias. One family where the mother was unable to give her mind to thinking about anything else on a first visit, was totally overwhelmed by the realisation that she and her husband had signed for £192 worth of books which they could not possibly afford, "But they looked so nice...whatever will we do?" Concurrently another firm was also "doing a survey of children"; their real purpose was to prepare the ground for a home photographer.

Such a background to our interviews meant that the first few minutes were more than ever crucial in establishing rapport with whoever answered the door. A careful introduction had been prepared, explaining the purpose of the interview; in practice, however, this was not used. It was found necessary to respond to whatever situation presented itself and to the mother as a person. It might be that she needed reassurance that we were not selling anything or, in some cases, she needed practical help. This ranged from keeping an eye on, or entertaining her children while she coped with some domestic chore, to taking her and her offspring to the casualty department of the local hospital.

Table VII: 4

Number of Interviews and Instruments Used

Instrument	Administered	Refused	Impractical	Total
Schedule	87	1	0	88
Tape	62	4	22	88
Grid	87	1	0	88
Rotter	86	0	1 (bereaved)	88

N = 88
Total interviewed = 87
Response rate = 98.86

Family composition within the sample was partly controlled by Council policy, which stipulated that families occupying two-bedroomed flats on the new estate would be eligible for a house if the family had two children of different sex, once the younger had reached the age of one year. Although not all families in the sample who were eligible for larger accommodation had in fact been moved, the

Council policy had two effects on the study - it on the one hand biassed the sample against large families, and on the other hand, included families whose size was to some extent influenced by such a policy. In order to obtain a house, for example, some families admitted to having more children than they otherwise might have chosen; when two, or three children of the same sex were born in the same family, this could be considered misfortune and a blow to hopes of a house and garden.

Table VII: 5

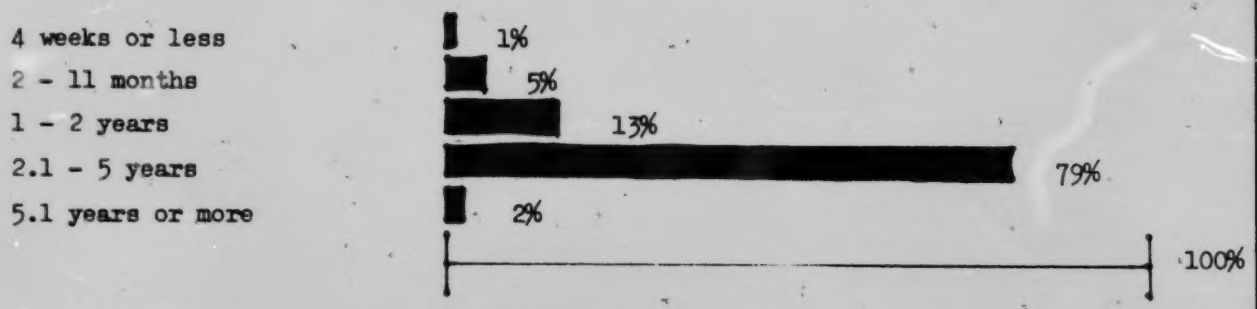
Ages and Number of Children

Age Group	Number of Children in the 87 Families
Over five	18
Four years old	50
Three years old	40
Under three	60
Total	168

The number of boys and girls was almost equal - 74 boys and 76 girls. Contrary to the impression gained by comments on the adjoining estate (i.e. houses), and even from social workers and health visitors, most of the families with young children living on the new estate were local. Only 15% had come from outside the area, most of these re-housed from London.

Table VII: 6

Chart 1: Time lived at Present Address



The majority (79%) had lived at their present address between two and five years; most parents seemed to have had settled childhoods; that is, with no moves. They had left a local school at 15, and, if they were girls, gone to work in an office, shop or factory. Boys were more likely to have had some training, probably an apprenticeship. but this usually turned out to be different from their subsequent occupations. There appeared to be a variety of reasons for this. "He trained as a paint sprayer, but he can't get work in that, so he's a dustman". And another; "He was apprenticed as a carpenter, but the pay was no good and now he's self-employed. He does home decorating. We're doing alright now." There was anecdotal evidence, then, of a change of occupation among some males who had been apprenticed. It seemed that this often coincided with marriage. Most girls (60%) were married before they were 20, and their husbands were under 22; they were unlikely to have planned their first child (67%) and so were often faced in the beginning with problems of money and accommodation.

Table VII: 7

Age Parents left School

Age	Numbers of:	
	Mothers	Fathers
15 and under	55	68
16	25	14
17 and 18	6	2
Over 18	1	2
Not known	0	3
Total	87	87

Table VII: 8

Mobility of Parents (in childhood)

Mobility	Number of:	
	Mothers	Fathers
Settled	57	59
1 - 2 moves	25	20
Mobile	5	5
Not known	0	3
Total	87	87

Table VII: 9

Father's Training

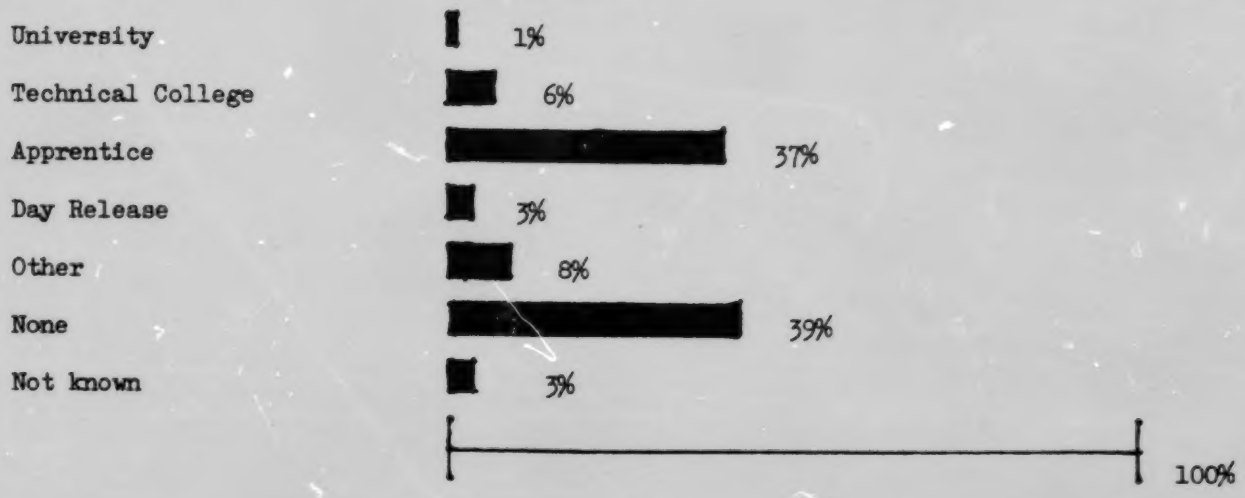


Table VII: 10

Mother's Employment on Leaving School

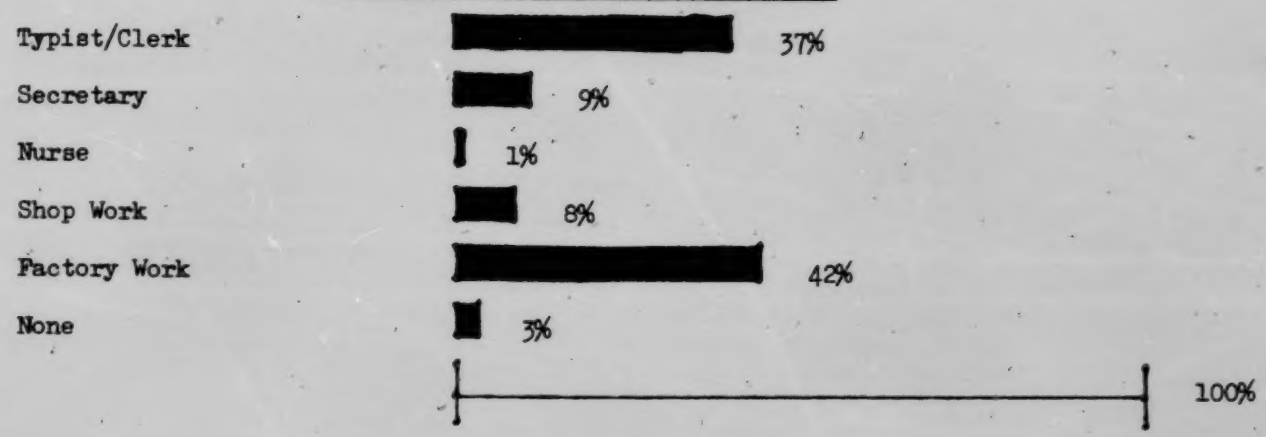


Table VII: 11

Parents' Age at Marriage

Age	Numbers of:	
	Mothers	Fathers
16 - 17	8	0
17.1 - 18	11	2
18.1 - 20	34	20
20.1 - 22	24	31
22.1 - 25	10	20
Over 25	0	14
Total	87	87

Most mothers worked until the birth of their first child (see Table VII: 13); the general feeling was that a mother not only should, but wanted to be at home with her children. Husbands could find plenty of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled employment at what was considered a reasonable living wage, both at the airport and in local factories. Failing this, there was always the possibility of using practical handyman skills, and being 'self-employed'. The homogeneity of the sample in respect of housing and employment is reflected in the non-existence of fathers in class Va occupation (Table VII: 12a).

Table VII: 12a

Father's Occupation (Hall-Jones Scale)

Class	Definition	Number	%
I - IV	Professional, Executive, Inspectional, and Supervisory	11	13
Va	Routine grades of non-manual work	0	0
Vb	Skilled manual	39	45
VI	Semi-skilled manual	12	14
VII	Routine manual	17	19
	Unemployed	1	1
	Not applicable (one-parent)	7	8
	TOTAL	87	100

Table VII: 12b

Socio-Economic Grouping Compared with Ward and Borough Percentages

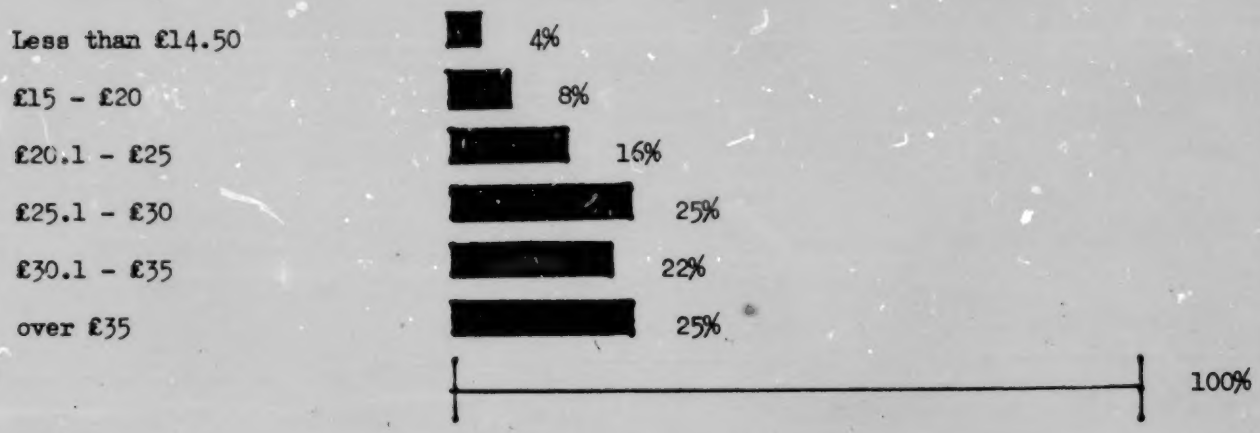
Class	Definition	% in Sample	% in Ward	% in Borough
I - IV	Professional and supervisory, self-employed	13	19.4	25.4
Va	Routine non-manual	0	20.0	23.5
Vb	Skilled manual	45	34.1	30.2
VI	Semi-skilled manual	14	16.1	11.4
VII	Routine manual	19	10.4	9.5

Source: 1966 and 1971 Censuses - Population of Hillingdon 1974 (May)

Skilled or semi-skilled workers accounted for 59% of fathers; this was reflected in the pattern of family income.

Bar Chart VII: 13

Family Income



The majority of mothers (64.3%) considered that they had enough to live on. A few, even in the higher income bracket, were uncomfortable because they had run into debt and it was, of course, difficult to judge their financial position from furnishing and appliances, due to this very problem. The general impression, however, was of young couples who were reasonably well off and whose money was mainly spent on their homes and children. As perceived in the home, the economic level was high: 74% had washing machines, fridge, dryer and electric mixer. All but three families had TV, usually colour; those who did not, said the decision was deliberate. As these were also amongst the few families who stood apart because they had hobbies or outside interests (e.g. cultivating an allotment for vegetable freezing; designing and fitting out their own motorised caravan), the statement seemed in keeping with their life style. Freezers were not generally considered a luxury. Most families (60%) ran a car and 40% had a telephone. It was clear that practically all the mothers took pride and pleasure in their homes and possessions.

This impression was sustained by comments made about the flats and houses. There was little doubt that for most parents, the flats were their first real home; previously, they had been living in rented, furnished accommodation or with parents. They frequently expressed the view that "flats were good value for money", and that in comparison with some of their friends whom they had envied because they had managed to "put down on a house", in retrospect they considered themselves lucky. "They've got a right millstone round their necks; they can't

afford another baby, and the wife has to go out to work" (their emphasis).

Where the new estate was concerned, a distinction was often made between the accommodation inside and the external appearance and amenity. "I love my flat, but if only it were somewhere else, anywhere else," and another typical remark, "Once you get in and shut the door, it's alright - the flats inside are very nice really, but..." Reservations sprang from two sources; one was the desire for a garden, or at least some enclosed space where children could play. The other probably applied more to those mothers who had been re-housed from London and missed the variety of city life and their own families. "There's not enough for my age group," (20's), "It's terrible, you get so depressed; they're a funny lot here - even for a game of bingo you've got to go two connections, and the journey takes more than the games you play", "Most days, I go back to me mam" (Wandsworth).

There was, then, some evidence of a difference in attitude towards the area, though not the accommodation, between those families who were 'locals' and those who were not. This was evident even within the new estate: "There's none from London in this block, you know, and it makes a difference" (this mother was explaining her friendly attitude to her neighbours). But other mothers from London, even though they had reservations about local amenities and missed their own families, had made friends with their neighbours. "I wouldn't change mine for the world; she's smashing, blimey, she's nearly raised my Debbie."

After some weeks interviewing, it began to look as though many of the comments about Londoners or locals were rationalisations. If a mother wanted to be friendly, there was someone to be friendly with; if, however, she wanted to 'keep herself to herself', she could, although there was little doubt that mothers in some blocks were more outgoing than others, and there were some who felt isolated in blocks where perhaps there were no others with young children.

Obviously, much depended on the personality of individuals, which was beyond the scope of this study to measure; but while almost exactly half the mothers in the sample were "in and out of each other's houses" and felt "we're all in the same boat here", they could be matched with other mothers who encouraged little or no social intercourse with their neighbours, because they considered that "once you let 'em in, they're never out". There were also those few who held themselves rather aloof because they did not like the estate and preferred to make their friends outside it ('upwardly socially mobiles'), and those they tended to ostracise (the 'roughs' or 'downwardly socially mobiles').

Whatever was felt about neighbours, wherever they lived in "Hillcroft", all mothers had in common the experience of bringing up children. When they began to talk about this, a clear cut difference emerged between those who lived in flats and those who had a house. Perhaps it was best summed up by a mother

who had been moved from a flat to a house. She had a boy and a girl, both under five, and had been in her new home for two months. "It's made a wonderful difference to all of us; my husband says I'm a different person. And I'm off pills, aren't I?... The children can play in the garden; look, they're digging there now, and I never dare let them out of the flat."

That is not to say that all mothers who lived in flats found existence as trying as this mother had done. A subjective impression was that much seemed to depend on the personality of the mother and how space was used, as well as what she had been used to previously. The majority did not seem to find indoor play space much of a problem, unless they were so worried about letting the child out alone, that most of the day both were incarcerated in the flat. Noise, however, was a source of difficulty. Children are naturally energetic; most had a tricycle or scooter, but often were not allowed to ride it outside because of 'rough' children, danger on the road or weather. They would therefore tear round on their bikes from one room to another in the flats with the consequent thump every time they rode over the rise in each doorway. On the ground floor, this was not too resounding, but on the middle and top floors, it could lead to tension for mothers and neighbours. This was not always so. "Dick and Jan are as noisy as we are, so there's no complaints"; but wherever there were elderly or childless neighbours, mothers were often very much on edge. Even where there were children on both floors, tension could arise from lack of soundproofing. "Her children are early risers and when my husband tries to get a bit of sleep (shiftworker), they're rushing round and shouting and water running, but what can you do - she's got two children and she's a heavy person." All neighbours were not as accommodating as this one; another mother who made her children's clothes said that she had only to get her machine out, even in the afternoon or early evening, for her neighbour to be banging on the ceiling, or coming down "swearing through the letterbox".

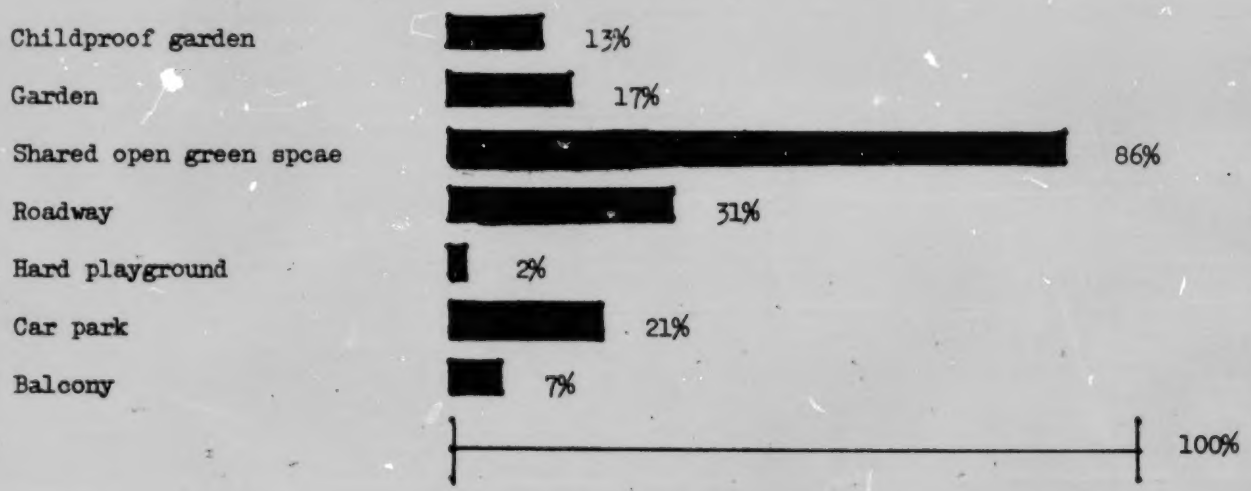
Clearly the more children in the family, the greater the noise level was likely to be; similarly, the greater the pressure on space, including play space. Most mothers (62%) let their children play wherever they wished in the house or flat. "What I say is, it's a home, and we go where we like in it, so why shouldn't they?" A smaller group of mothers (22%) organised a bedroom as a play area; some had been furnished with great care and were full of toys. Where there were several children in a family or "friends" who came in to play, this arrangement seemed to work satisfactorily. But where there was only one child, the bedroom became rather a storage area and toys were brought into the living room or kitchen to be "with mum"(13%). Very few, only 2%,(all found amongst the house dwellers) had any separate play area - these were 'garden rooms'.

As has already been pointed out, it was outside play which created most tension in the flats; here again much depended on where exactly a flat was situated and, perhaps more important, the mother's way of dealing with a problem. Stairs were one example. Two mothers, each with one child, in what appeared to be very similar circumstances three flights up, reacted completely differently. "The very first thing I did when I came here," said one, "was to teach her how to climb the stairs and go down" (the child was 18 months old). The other mother, who had been living in the flats since her child was one year old, felt unable to let her child negotiate the stairs alone at four years old. She was afraid, not only of the danger of falling but of the hazards of play in the open plan area. What were these dangers? They were evidently more real in some parts of "Hillcroft" than others. To play in a road in a quiet cul de sac was different from playing in a busy service road. Particularly on the new estate, children from flats near the roads were more vulnerable than those away from the traffic; those mothers whose kitchen windows overlooked a small area of green, felt more secure in letting their children out to play than those who could neither see nor hear their youngsters once they had left the flat. There were certainly differences of degree; but nevertheless, each mother had to decide on the way she was going to respond to problems associated with living in a flat on an estate with no enclosed play area for small children. Mothers were virtually united in their condemnation of the so-called 'children's play area' (all but two said they would not let their children go there). They objected to broken bottles, to the bigger, rougher children, to the fact that it was not enclosed and some, that undesirable strangers lurked in the vicinity. Nor were balconies satisfactory play spaces (92%). They had several disadvantages; firstly, they were not enclosed, but were rather 'landings' which served the entrances to three flats. Secondly, there was no guarantee that children would not overcome any home-made barriers and wander away or fall down stairs; finally, there was the problem of noise, since balconies were directly outside windows of flats for the elderly. This meant that the only outside play space left for children in flats were the roads, car parks and shared open green space. Most mothers living in the flats (86%) felt that outside play space was unsafe and a further 11% that it was "fairly safe", leaving 2% who considered it "safe". This was basically because the green space was nowhere enclosed and for many of them (approximately half), it was impossible to hear, see or get to a child quickly in an emergency. But these figures do not quite tie up with the proportion of mothers who nevertheless let their children play outside on the road and car parks (39%), as well as on the open green space (86%). This may reflect the policy of some to encourage a child to cope with his environment, whatever it is, from the

earliest opportunity,or of indifference. In others, it may obscure tensions generated by letting a child play in circumstances which do not permit peace of mind.

Table VII: 14

Use of Outdoor Playspace



One compromise solution seemingly adopted by many mothers was to keep children in the flats in the mornings, while they "did their work", and in the afternoons to join in games and play together with the children on the grass. On sunny summer afternoons, this worked well; sometimes mothers would take turns to look after children. Where a mother had made friends, this sort of arrangement would continue indoors in the winter months. The visual impression gained from several weeks of summer visiting on the new estate, of mothers in deck chairs and children happily engaged in water play, could be misleading, however. It left out of account those mothers who did not feel able to join in and those few who, even in hot, sticky, weather, remained indoors with the curtains drawn. It is not possible to say exactly how many mothers this applied to; approximately 52% "kept themselves to themselves" and "did not mix"; but naturally, some of these had friends off the estate whom they visited, or they might choose to "go to the park", swimming or other activities. Non-social activities off the estate were mainly confined to the park (57% went regularly); swimming (20% used the baths "fairly often" and this seemed to be on father's initiative), and shopping. But it was quite evident that flat-bound mothers did exist, from the fact that interviewers found them at home and were told such things as, "I was here three months before I dare open the door", and another, "He (her four year old) stands with his nose on the window all the time - he looks at the other children ,

you see, but I just couldn't go down there."

From the mother's point of view, problems regarding play and their children centred on practical considerations of noise, control and storage. But what about the quality of play from the child's point of view? Children of three and four begin to play together; experience of social play is often thought to be one of the most beneficial aspects of a playgroup particularly for children on their own.

Table VII: 15

Mother's attitudes to neighbours and social play of children

Mother's Attitude to Neighbours	Child Plays Alone	Child Plays With One or More Friends	Child Plays With Parents or Siblings	Total	%
Very friendly	6	27	12	45	52
Keeps self to self	3	23	5	31	36
Doesn't mix	4	4	3	11	12
Total	13	54	20	87	
%	15	62	23	100	100

As the above table shows, most children (62%) usually had someone, either a particular friend or a group of three or four year olds with whom they habitually played. Mothers seemed to think that one of the advantages of flat living was that there were other children around for their youngsters to play with. But in spite of predominantly friendly attitudes to neighbours, 38% had not made friends sufficiently well to say that their children had any one outside the family to play with. Factors which could influence this situation might be a combination of the following - firstly, a mother's comparative isolation in a block where there were no families with young children; her own personality, which if she were shy - and especially in the absence of any centre for mothers and young children, could prevent her from approaching people or 'knocking on doors'. On the other hand, there would no doubt be some who were happy and fulfilled within their family unit and others who did not wish to become involved.

Mothers were asked about the sort of activities their children could engage in out of doors. Out door play apparatus was poor, if judged by the availability of sand, water, swings, slides or climbing frame and bikes. Most children

had bikes or scooters, but on the new estate or in flats many were only allowed to ride them round the flat or under supervision. Only houses with gardens afforded opportunity for sand, slides or climbing frames. It was observed, however, that those children who were allowed to play outside by themselves on the estate displayed more ingenuity in finding a variety of natural activities for themselves; these, with lower standards of hygiene and safety, were natural parallels of much 'play apparatus'. They would balance along the top of low walls, swing on bars dividing the green areas from pavements, slide down the garage ramps, dig around the trees and shrubs and play with water trickling from open pipes. They created their own 'adventure playground'.

The range of toys for indoor play was wide and it was evident that a great deal of money was spent in small everyday toys, as well as expensive items like dolls' prams. This mother's list was typical of toys considered desirable; "She's got dolls, a lovely cot, guns, cars; she's got everything, right down to the battery operated washing machine, crockery washer - upper, that sort of thing." Mothers were asked whether their children ever did finger painting or whether they used big brushes when painting or if mother gave the children dough or pastry to play with when baking. Very few mothers actually made dough for their children, but most (69%) habitually gave them bits of uncooked pastry when baking. The general reaction to painting was typified by the response, "He likes a pencil and a bit of paper", or illustrated by this comment, "I've got a big paintbox in there, that's got 108 colours in it - but she's not keen."

Television - mainly colour - was to be found in most homes; a subjective impression was that it was often on, though not necessarily watched. Undoubtedly children watched it (64% regularly) but they did not seem to sit and watch with their mothers. It was considered an advantage for the children to have television, but was something they could watch for a while when the fancy took them - rather a background accompaniment. Several mothers said it was "company" and lessened the likelihood of hearing what was going on in the adjoining flat. Television could act as a two-way 'scrambler'.

Once a mother had finished her housework, she had very little else, apart from shopping, which she felt she had to do. Most mothers (78%) said they spent an hour or more playing with their children each day; the form this play took varied from involvement in games to active encouragement while the children played. "Even if I don't actually play with them, I'll give them a broom or dustpan and brush and let them play with it." There appeared to be few children's books in the homes and few mothers used the local library, either for themselves or their children. Although there was a children's section and a regular children's story time

in the local library (10 minutes' walk away), only 7% of mothers had ever been with their children. But they said they bought books - mainly Rupert and the Ladybird series which was sold in the local supermarket (80%). A number of mothers seemed concerned with their children's destructiveness and this appeared to influence their use of library facilities - "The only thing about getting a book from the library is if a kid rips it." This destructiveness and the disposable quality of books may also account for the observed paucity of books in the homes, given that mothers said they bought them. Bedtime did not seem to be a time for reading or special ritual; "I read if he wants me to, but he usually just falls asleep." It was more likely to be, "Look at your book" (and keep quiet).

Mothers themselves did not read a great deal. Nearly all those who read a daily paper took the 'Sun' or the 'Mirror' (63%) and of the Sunday newspapers the 'News of the World' was most popular (34%), followed by 'The People' and the 'Sunday Mirror'.

Table VII: 16

Readership of Daily Papers

Daily Papers			Sunday Papers		
Paper	Readers	%	Paper	Readers	%
None	25	28.7	None	28	32.1
Times/Guardian	2	2.2	Sunday Times/Observer	5	5.7
Telegraph	1	1.1	Sunday Telegraph	0	0
Mail/Express	4	4.5	News of the World	30	34.4
Sun/Mirror	55	63.2	Sunday Mirror/People	15	17.2
			Express (Sunday)	4	4.5
			Other	5	5.7

Mothers were almost equally divided between those who read the local paper and those who did not. Rather than "sit about" mothers who had been brought up in the district would visit or be visited by their family and friends. Most meetings were in each other's homes. The majority of mothers saw their own mothers once a week or more (60%) and the proportion rose to 80% when relatives were included in social visits. Sport, bingo and the pub played very little part in their

social life. Entertaining was far more likely to be done at home; indeed, many sitting rooms had well-stocked, fitted bars hung with trophies and souvenirs from foreign holidays - a priority for dusting each day (a regular annual holiday was enjoyed by 46% and a package tour abroad was normal). Evenings otherwise would be spent watching television, playing cards or "catching up with the ironing". A subjective impression was that most parents were keen on 'Do it Yourself'. Fathers were practical and flats were papered and painted regularly. Even where parents could go out together in the evening, that is where relatives or friends would baby sit (72%), mothers often said they preferred to stay at home. There was little temptation, it seemed, to join any of the evening classes offered in the vicinity on a wide range of subjects; only 5 mothers had attended a class in the previous two years. Some husbands (41%) went out on their own, mainly to the pub, one or two nights a week, but mothers did not normally go out in the evening except on special occasions or to "pop next door" to a Tupperware party or to see a friend.

Table VII: 17

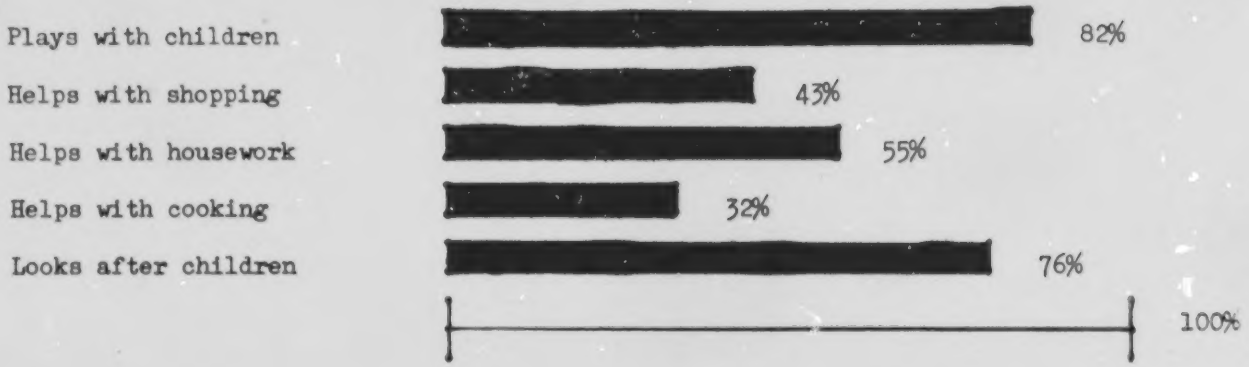
Social Activities

Activity	% Participating
Pub	17.2
Friend's house	83.9
Hobby (e.g. riding)	6.8
Sport	5.7
Bingo	5.8
None	10.3

Most fathers took an active part in the home as well as playing their primary role of wage earner. They shared the household chores, cooking and looking after children, and this applied particularly to those who were shift workers. This was considered an advantage, since the family could often go out together on weekdays - shopping in Slough, picnics at Ruislip Lido, Burnham Beeches, Black Park and Langley Park were favourites. It is clear from the chart below that the sphere in which fathers were most likely to be involved was the children. They both played with them and looked after them more than helping with housework, cooking and shopping. This may have reflected the degree of interest and caring which both parents felt for their children.

Table VII: 18

Father's role in relation to children and household chores



When asked about the way they disciplined their children, most mothers (61%) were quite shocked at the idea of threatening a child with any other person, although father was used as a deterrent by some (23%). The prevalent view of the sample (90%) was that parents not only often were wrong but admitted they were wrong to their children. Mothers in this study also thought it better to tell children the truth when they asked 'embarrassing' questions (86%). When a child was naughty, the most usual punishment was a smack; mothers accepted this as reasonable and salutary (53%). Some mothers, particularly where they felt they had hot tempers, preferred "temporary banishment" (25%). When a child came to his mother and complained of quarrels with other children, the normal expedient was to "hit back!" (52%). One mother explained that she "used to encourage him to let other children have turns and to give way, not to hit others. He was very good about it," but now she "realised that this was the wrong thing. In order to survive outside, whatever I would like him to do, I've got to get him to hit back and stick up for himself."

A subjective impression was that the most usual way of getting a child to do what was wanted was by bribing with sweets and crisps, ice-creams and lollies. Less than half the mothers (46%) had taken their children to the dentist during the previous twelve months, but a few mothers said, too, that they would take the children but not go themselves, because of the expense. The idea of dental checks was not universal or even commonly accepted - as one mother said, "Why frighten him? Why take him to the dentist when he hasn't got anything wrong?"

About half the mothers (52%) still paid a yearly visit to the clinic. Even those who did not do so still seemed to have a very warm feeling towards the health visitor whom they felt they knew and to whom many would go for help. Of the 50% who would go to an official body for help, half would choose the "welfare"

and the other half said they would go to the Citizens' Advice Bureau. Obviously, those mothers who had young babies still had stronger links with the clinic. Overall, health in "Hillcroft" seemed good, certainly as far as the children were concerned. The majority (71%) were "never ill"; there was a handful (c. 6%) of children with reported eye trouble, hearing difficulty and speech defect and only two children who were physically or mentally handicapped. Although there were seven children who were cited as having a speech defect, there were others who, had they been observed by a playgroup supervisor, would almost certainly have been recommended for specialist advice.

The question of working mothers and employment for mothers was approached in a number of ways, not only whether or not they worked, but whether they would like to work, and the nature of such work, as well as their 'ideal' of pre-school provision. It became clear that for most mothers, there was not the pressure to work; nor were there the incentives of high wages and convenient hours. The prevalent desire (74%) was for a "little job" during school hours once their children had started school, but 72% were adamant that even if there were provision locally to look after their under fives, they would not think of going out before their child was school age. The reason was not hard to find. Interests of these mothers was home based; they had left school early, most at age 15 (63%) without any feeling of achievement. Their achievement was marriage and having children, their 'job' was to care for their home and their children and most mothers seemed to feel fulfilled doing this. Even if they "had their time over again", almost half (49%) said they would do exactly the same thing again; the rest said they would have liked some training and would still want to marry, though not to have their children so young.

Patterns of employment will obviously vary from one district to another and it is possible that if "Hillcroft" were close to factories where there were highly paid, congenial jobs available, or if the financial situation were tighter, the proportion of working mothers might be different. With the situation as it was, however, the employment pattern in this area showed a marked contrast with that reported in other studies - notably the Kirkby survey reported in Chapter I (Moss, P., Tizard, J. and Crook, J. 1973).

Chart VII: 19a

Employment of Mothers

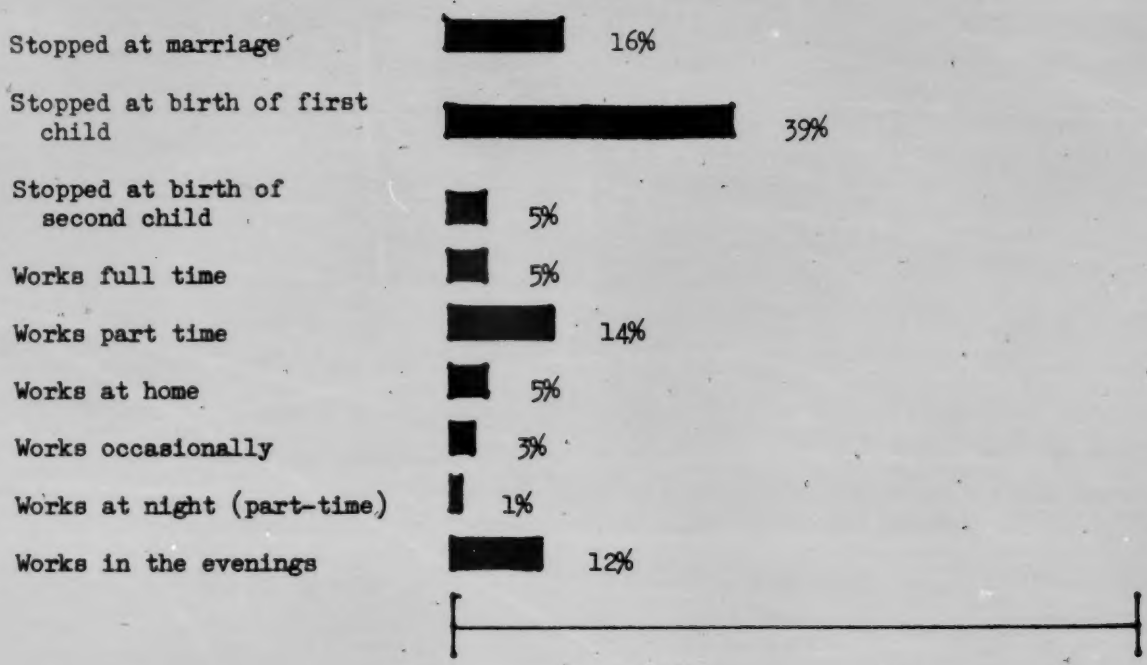


Table VII: 19b

Comparison of Working Mothers' Pattern of Employment in Ward and Sample (with children under 5)

Hours of work	Ward		Sample	
	No.	%	No.	%
Up to 8 hours weekly	10	4	9	12
Up to 30 hours weekly	160	67	18	58
Full time	70	29	4	13
Total no. of mothers	240	100	31	100

In sum therefore, the residents of "Hillcroft" formed a fairly homogeneous, working class community as far as socio-economic status, family life, child rearing practice and material prosperity was concerned. They tended to have roots in the community, to have limited educational backgrounds, to have a restricted social life that focussed strongly on the home, and to place their priorities in unequivocal material possessions rather than less measurable long-term gains. For most of them their council flats or houses were their first homes and valued as such. Just as they enjoyed being at home, so too, they enjoyed the company of their children.

"Hillcroft" and Pre-school Provision

With the background that has been described, what was the general feeling towards pre-schooling? The enjoyment and acceptance of under-fives at home was reflected in the view that mothers did not want them to start school full-time sooner than necessary. Pre-school was considered an introduction to the "big school" and a weaning away from them - a necessary evil. They also distinguished between three and four year olds, as was anticipated in the Plowden report, and as appeared, to some extent, in their use of existing provision before the introduction of the new facility. As has already been explained, there was no easily accessible day care or nursery class provision in "Hillcroft". The nearest playgroups had long waiting lists and entailed a considerable effort on the mother's part to get her child there and back. It is therefore hardly surprising that 77% of children made no use of any form of provision.

Table VII: 20

Facilities Used Prior to New Provision

	Playgroup		Day Nursery or Nursery School			None	Total
	2 a.m.s	3 a.m.s	5 a.m.s	4 full days	5 full days		
Three year olds	5	1	1	1	1	31	40
Four year olds	7	1	2	1	3	36	50
Total	12	2	3	2	4	67	90

(Desired provision reflected a similar tendency - p.22)

As to 'desired provision', the table below shows clearly that the majority of mothers did not envisage sending their three year old children to any form of provision for more than two or three half days. At age three, about one fifth (18%) wished to make use of the facility for five half days and only one 'ideally' wanted full time provision. As the children reached four, mothers felt they would benefit from more sessions, but still the proportions were low; five half days were required by just under one third (31%) and, fewer still, full time attendance (11%). This would mean that 58% of four year olds would not be getting five half days.

Table VII: 21

Number of Sessions Required Each Week for Three and Four Year Olds

Desired Provision	Number of Sessions Per Week (i.e. half days)							
	1	2	3	4	5	Full Time	None	Total
For 3 year olds	1	18	23	1	16	1	27	87
For 4 year olds	1	7	19	4	27	10	19	87

The majority of mothers stressed the importance of choice for everybody; most (72%) thought there should be enough places for all those who wished to make use of pre-school provision; few (2%) wanted compulsion at three and about one fifth (16%) would prefer compulsory state education at four. Total disagreement with any pre-school provision or desire for radically different facilities was expressed by one tenth of the sample (10% - discussed in Chapter 8). When asked about home visits, mothers' first reactions were unfavourable; they thought it would mean people coming round "poking their noses". But this was probably influenced by the general antipathy towards callers which has been mentioned previously.

There were apparent discrepancies between the type of provision desired and the number of half days for which it was required. This evidence should be treated with some caution as this was a question which had evidently not been widely considered by mothers. Mothers were shown a card explaining the differences between facilities - that attendance at nursery school or class usually involved five half days, at least for four year olds, for example. But it must be recognised that more subtle differences may not have made an immediate impact on mothers faced with such information for the first time. Nevertheless, there was some basis for

believing that mothers perceived the needs of their older children as different from that of three year olds. Some mothers, for example, were quite clear that they would prefer state provision at either nursery class or school, but maintained that they did not want their children to attend for more than three or four half days; this accounts for the differences in the tables.

Table VII: 22

Desired Form of Pre-school Provision for Three and Four Year Olds

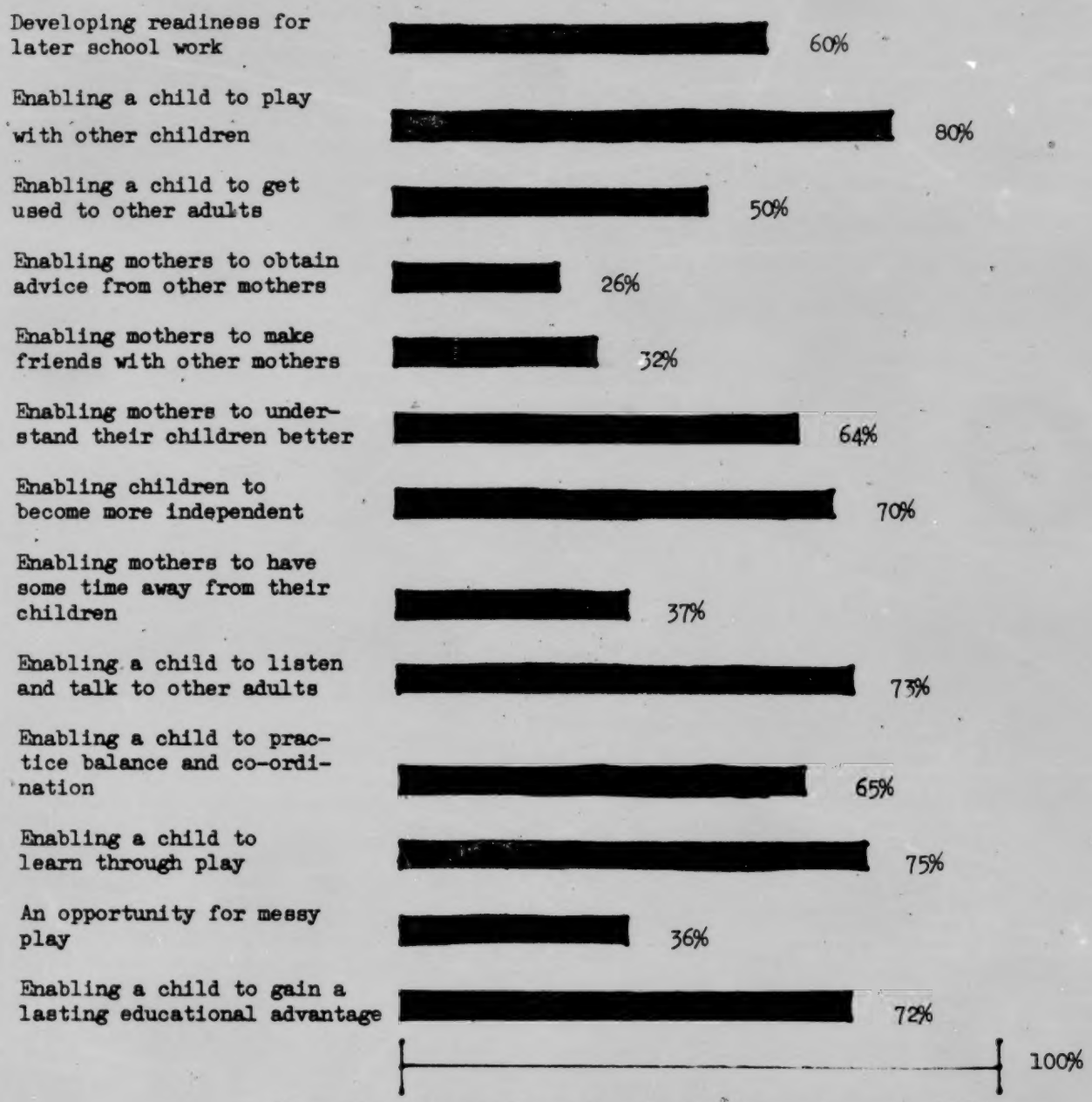
	Nursery School	Nursery Class	Hall P.G.	Home P.G.	Child Minder	Other (Relig.)	None	Day Care	Total
Three year olds	10	23	29	5	0	7	11	2	87
%	11	26	33	6	0	8	13	2	100
Four year olds	14	32	23	3	0	6	6	3	87
%	16	37	26	3.5	0	7	7	3.5	100

It appeared that a class attached to an infant school appealed to mothers because they saw the function of pre-schooling as preparatory to the "big school" and thought it would accustom the children to it if the buildings were close together. There was also the point that where there were older children as well, collection was easier. For three year olds a playgroup, as opposed to nursery school or class, was attractive as preparation for school.

Mothers were asked about the relative importance they attached to various aspects of pre-school provision. As the Chart VII: 23 shows, facilities were valued for the potential benefit to children and not to mothers. Enabling mothers to obtain advice from other mothers and the supervisor, to make friends or to have any time away from their children did not rate highly. Enabling a child to play with other children and to learn through play were of paramount importance for them; a lasting educational advantage rated slightly lower. Advantages for mothers and an opportunity for messy play rated lowest for them, which may reflect their lack of experience of the scope of, and reasons for, such activities for under fives.

Chart VII: 23

Importance Attached by Mothers to Aspects of Playgroup Practice


Developing readiness for later school work
60%
Enabling a child to play with other children
80%
Enabling a child to get used to other adults
50%
Enabling mothers to obtain advice from other mothers
26%
Enabling mothers to make friends with other mothers
32%
Enabling mothers to understand their children better
64%
Enabling children to become more independent
70%
Enabling mothers to have some time away from their children
37%
Enabling a child to listen and talk to other adults
73%
Enabling a child to practice balance and co-ordination
65%
Enabling a child to learn through play
75%
An opportunity for messy play
36%
Enabling a child to gain a lasting educational advantage
72%
100%

Given that the vocal reaction to the proposed new facility was favourable, and that pre-school provision was generally seen as "desirable", why, hitherto, had so few mothers made the effort to go further afield for something that they considered would benefit their children? What were the chief reasons for not making the effort? Expense appeared to be only a minor consideration (10/87); mothers nevertheless welcomed the subsidised provision. While only a small proportion

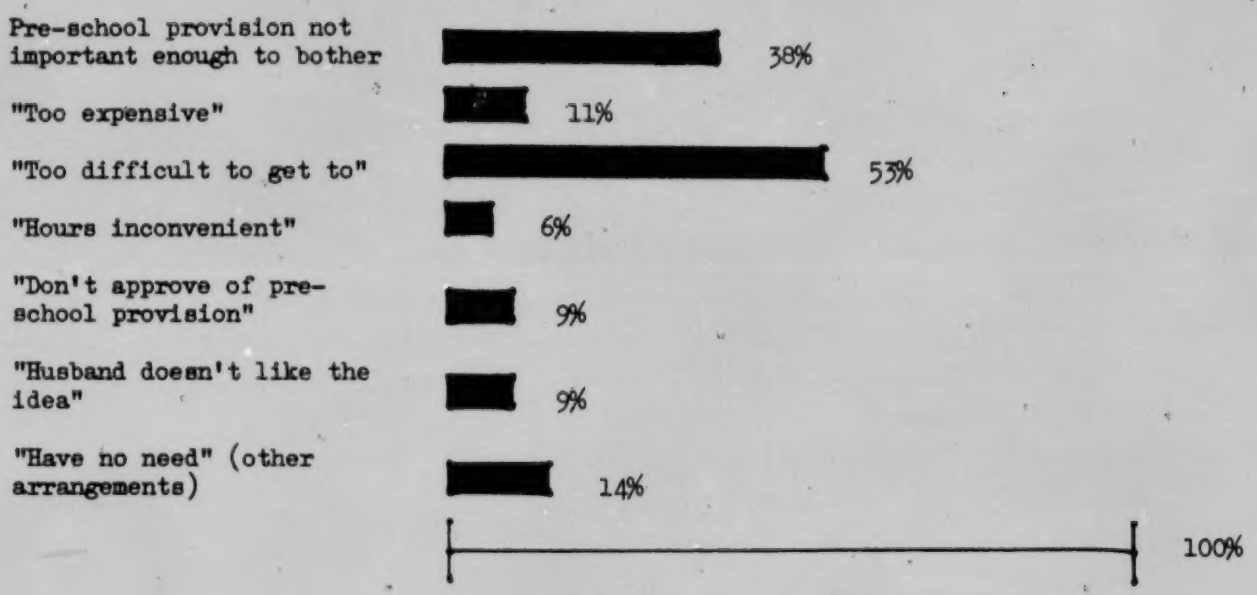
(4%) said they wouldn't send their child unless the playgroup was free, the rest said they were content either to pay a small sum (15p - 44%) or even 25-35p or more. The most striking aspect of this was the small proportion of mothers who thought it should be free; most mothers seemed to want to pay something.

Was it then something about the provision itself that influenced mothers? Non-approval of pre-schooling was voiced by few (8/87). In an attempt to assess how far existing provision would meet their needs, mothers were asked about a number of ancillary services. The possibility of meals appealed to approximately one third of mothers but did not draw an immediate enthusiastic response; a pick-up ser-vice would be more appreciated (49/87) and so would some form of supervised play in the holidays (57/87). As to their own involvement in a group preventing them sending their child, 4/87 mothers said that mother involvement would stop them using the facility; these were one-parent families. A wide range of hopes and fears applied to the remainder. Their children were the pivot of their interest and mothers wanted to be involved, though not necessarily on a rota. Well over half (57%) expressed a desire to help in this way; however, since the playgroup was seen as a means of accustoming children to be away from them for short periods, some felt that to stay at the playgroup would defeat the purpose. They were, however, willing and interested to help behind the scenes (making toys, mending, washing clothes or preparing the mid-morning break); it was noticeable that the jobs they saw themselves doing were menial and self-effacing. Even those who confided that they wished they had "stayed on at school" and that they would have "liked to work with children" were too lacking in confidence in themselves to think they could "take a course" or take part in the administration of the playgroup. Those who were more socially inclined, however, were interested in fund-raising projects.

By far the most frequent reason given for non-use of provision hitherto, was distance (46/87). Indeed, those mothers who did take their children to existing groups often had to leave home at 8.15 a.m., walk thirty minutes and walk back. By this time, they had to begin to think about collection. It is quite understandable that such a procedure would be unattractive unless a mother were convinced of the benefit. Many mothers would find it totally impractical. Perhaps the most potentially significant response was that 37% of mothers said that pre-school provision was not important enough to bother about anyway. "I wouldn't go out of my way to send her to a playgroup," said one mother, "she has plenty of people to play with her - we all know how to stick bits of paper down for kids to paint and that." What remained to be seen was how these mothers would react when provision was available within a few minutes walk; would there still be a wide margin of mothers who saw the provision as an irrelevance?

Table VII: 24

Reasons given for non-use of provision



Appendix VII: 1

Name ..... Address .....
.....
.....

Date of birth of children under five
1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....

children over five
1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....

Provision used: Nursery School
Nursery Class
Day Nursery
Home Playgroup
Hall Playgroup
Child-minder
None

No. of sessions a week .....

Willing to be interviewed again: Yes
No

CHAPTER VIII

Users, non-users and existing users of pre-school provision - specific characteristics

From the point of view of this study, the 87 families in "Hillcroft" with children under five could be categorised according to their use of, and attitude towards, pre-school provision. In particular, there were some families who were already using pre-school resources outside the area. Among those who were not making use of pre-schooling, there were those who, upon being told of the playgroup to be provided, indicated they would wish to use it and would place their names on the waiting list. Finally, there were those families not using any provision who indicated, prior to the playgroup being provided, that they did not want to use any pre-school facilities, and would not want their names on a waiting list. Our study was, of course, focussed on this particular group and its characteristics, but it was not until the preliminary survey was carried out that we could be certain that our sample contained any families with such views. As it was, the number who responded in this way was large, compared with the total size of the sample; it amounted to almost one third of the total (30%), and was therefore comparable to the findings in the Lambeth study referred to in Chapter I (page 8). Table I gives the figures both for "Hillcroft", and also for Lambeth, when only families with three and four year old children are considered; of the Lambeth sample, 34% comprised families with children under pre-school playgroup age. These are therefore not included. Eventual non take-up of provision in Lambeth amounted to 35% and included the 15% who had expressed their original intention to make use of the facilities.

Table VIII: 1

Grouping of Families according to use of Pre-school Provision (original sample) in "Hillcroft" and Lambeth study

	Did not wish for provision		Wished for provision (waiting list)		Already used provision		Total	
Area	Hill.	Lam.	Hill.	Lam.	Hill.	Lam.	Hill.	Lam.
No. of families	26	13	41	10	20	43	87	66
Percentage of families	30	20	47	15	23	65	100	100

One further reflection is that "Hillcroft" was a very different area from Lambeth, in that it was not recognised as one of high deprivation; reference to Chapter VII indicates that it was indeed the reverse, being among the three most favoured London Boroughs. To draw attention to the existence of a group of mothers who did not make use of the provision, however, is in no sense a criticism of them, nor is there any implication that they should have used the provision. The suggestion is simply that vociferousness of demand was such that it masked a considerable number who did not make use of the facility.

In "Hillcroft" attrition was minimal,*at something just under 10%; the overall size of the sample was reduced to 77 families. Subsequent to the preliminary study, as a result of delays in building and using a new 'Behavioural' criteria for grouping, the samples reduced to 22, 37 and 18. Individuals comprising these groups did change in the interim between interviewing and availability of the provision, but this 'shifting' which was slight will be dealt with in a separate analysis.* What was above all important was that the size of groups remained remarkably stable despite the different measures used in gauging them.

The playgroup opened in February, 1974. Fees were 15p a session (half day), payable monthly or termly. Two groups met for two half days (mainly three year olds) and one group met for three half days (mainly four year olds). There was therefore the possibility of two or three half days a week for all three and four year old children whose parents wished to take advantage of the facility (60 places). It was hoped that mothers would wish to become involved, but there was no obligation on them to do so.

In the week prior to opening, all interested were welcomed to two open evenings, by invitation of the Mothers' Committee and the Tenants' Association. Both these occasions were well attended: each time approximately 30 parents took the opportunity of meeting the supervisor, asking questions and inspecting the premises.

Once the playgroup opened, criteria for allocation to each group in the study was behavioural: Group I comprised those who did not make use of the facility; Group II, those who did so, and Group III, those who already went elsewhere.

Table VIII: 2

Size of Groups

	Group I		Group II		Group III		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
"Old" Criterion	26	30	41	47	20	23	87	100
"New"Criterion	22	29	37	48	18	23	77	100

* see Appendix V

All variables were first analysed by simple x^2 technique, by group, and from this certain gross differences between them emerged. In discussing these differences, the analysis will focus on the new, smaller sample of 77 families. Clearly, within this framework, mothers in Group III (those who already used some form of provision) differed from those in the other two Groups in some important respects. Firstly, it was in this Group that one parent families predominated. As might be expected, some of these mothers were obliged to work and had priority in the use of day-care facilities.

Table VIII: 3

One Parent Families in Relation to Groups

Group	2 Parents	1 Parent	Total
I	21	1	22
II	35	2	37
III	13	5	18
Total	69	8	77

x^2 value = 7.60 Df = 2 $P < .05$

One of the general characteristics of mothers in "Hillcroft", already referred to in Chapter VII, was the small proportion who went out to work. Those who did so were concentrated in Group III: even so, and given that they used day-care facilities, only 3 out of 18 mothers in this Group worked full-time. One of the working mothers put it this way: "I found I was wandering round the flat thinking, "I want this and that", and inwardly I was blaming her (her daughter), and that's why I decided I had to do something. From my point of view it works out better I think, although I do feel I've lost something in the last year. I was fortunate enough to have her until she was 3½, but it was such a trial. I don't like going to work - I hate it. But when 'Jenny' goes to school I don't want her to be the only one with no shoes on her feet. It's not going to make her happy. All this business about rags and happiness just isn't true." And another: "As regards work, I haven't got a choice there. Either I do that and we eat, or else we go back to the breadline. I did it for a year, but if you're at home all day living on Social Security, you're not giving your child love, because you're looking round the flat all the time thinking, "I haven't got a three-piece suite, what am I going to do?", and

this reacts on the child."

In the Lambeth Study, it was found that a substantial proportion of mothers who, when first interviewed, said that they were not working, were in fact doing so. With this experience in mind, extreme caution was felt in interpreting the responses in "Hillcroft". It seemed, however, that where there was no economic necessity to work, mothers were happy not to do so. Where mothers on their own were helped by their parents or supported by boy friends or former husbands, it seems they chose not to work.

Table VIII: 4

Pattern of Mother's Employment

Group	Works Full Time	Works Part Time	Does Not Work	Total
I	1	4	17	22
II	0	12	25	37
III	3	10	5	18
Total	4	26	47	77
%	5	34	61	100

$x^2 = 15.11$ Df = 4 P significant .05

When this table is collapsed into 'works' and 'does not work' categories to avoid low expected frequencies, the difference in family composition and work pattern of those mothers already using some form of provision is underlined.

Table VIII: 5

Pattern of Mother's Employment (Collapsed Data)

Group	Mother Works	Mother Does Not Work	Total
I	5	17	22
II	12	25	37
III	13	5	18
Total	30	47	77
%	39	61	100

x^2 value = 11.44 Df = 2 $P < 0.01$

When the size, age and spread of families within the three groups are considered, further important differences emerge. Mothers in Group III had smaller families than those in Groups I and II. But there was an even more striking finding in the size of Group I families, which approximated to the national average of 2.4, as compared with the smaller family size of Groups II and III.

Table VIII: 6

Composition of Families: by Group

Group	12 months and under	1.1-2.4	2.5-3	3.1-4	4.1-5	over 5	Total	Mean Family Size
I	6	11	2	14	9	9	51	2.31
II	14	8	2	28	12	3	67	1.81
III	3	2	1	9	11	3	29	1.61
Total	23	21	5	51	32	15	147	1.90
%	16	14	3	35	22	10	100	

The three groups throw up different ratios of family size, based on the following distributions:-

Table VIII: 7

Distributions of Family Size: by Group

Number of Children in Family	Group I Frequency	Group II Frequency	Group III Frequency
1	2	10	7
2	13	24	11
3	6	3	0
4	0	0	0
5	1	0	0
	Var: 0.71	Var: 0.12	Var: 0.24

It will be seen from the above group distributions on family

size that Group III has a severely restricted distribution, as we would expect in the knowledge that it includes a number of one-parent families.* Indeed, for the purpose of this study, Group III families might be considered a 'deviant' group in that it is defined as those families using pre-school facilities outside the area. It includes all those mothers who for reasons of poor health, family difficulties or need to work, used day-care facilities (39%), and those who for similar reasons made use of playgroups as well as those who made a particular effort to seek out playgroup provision because they thought it beneficial for their children. A substantial proportion of mothers in this group could be considered 'special cases'. One mother, for example, spent the day caring for an aged, invalid relative who lived some distance away; she therefore found it easier to take her little girl to a nearby playgroup. Another mother herself worked as a nursery nurse and took her child with her. Others again were so depressed or unable to cope that their children had been recommended for day care. Because of this 'special' factor in the nature of Group III families, it might be more relevant to limit our analysis of Table VIII: 6 to Groups I and II. In particular, in regard to the distribution of family size in these two groups, the question arises: are these two distributions samples of the same basic population, or do they spring from different populations? With means of 2.31 for Group I, and 1.86 for Group II, a comparison of the means gives a t-ratio of 0.78, which does not allow us to discard the null hypothesis that they arise from the same population. On the other hand, from the frequency distribution table above, we see that the distribution of Group I families is considerably more spread out than that of Group II, and an analysis of variance test gives an F ratio = 5.92, $P < 0.001$. The distribution of Group I suggests, however, that the greater variance of that group might arise from the fact that a single case of a family with five children falls within this distribution and that, if this 'extreme' case were removed, we might then move towards homogeneity of variances. This is not the case. Removing the one 'extreme' value reduces the variance of Group I to 0.34, which leads to a new F ratio of 2.83, $P < 0.01$. It is therefore clear that, even when we make full allowance for any extreme scores, the variance of Group I family distribution is significantly different from that of Group II.

Focussing further on the distributions, however, it is notable that whereas there is a greater incidence of large (i.e. three and more) families in Group I, there is also a strikingly small number of families with only one child. It could be said that, in general, while in Groups II and III, we have one and two children families, in Group I we have two and three children families.

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* The assumption that one-parent families are necessarily smaller than nuclear or two-parent families requires qualification. In the definitive study on one-parent families drawn from the National Child Development Study and carried out

/cont.

Table VIII: 8a

Number of Children by Group

Group	1 Child	2 Children	3 or more Children	Total
I	2	13	7	22
II	1	10	3	37
III	7	11	0	18
Total	10	34	10	77

x^2 value = 25.81 Df = 4 $P < 0.01$

Although there are reservations concerning the use of x^2 statistic where the expected frequencies fall below 5 and the significance level must thus be treated with caution, the general trend for large families to be concentrated in Group I is clear. It is even more remarkable because, as explained in Chapter VI page 3, it was Council policy to rehouse families with two children of different sex, once the younger reached the age of one year. The sample was therefore plainly biassed against large families.

The situation in Group I seems to imply that families in this group not only have larger families, but that the range of their children's ages is wider, too. Almost certainly, we have here a bi-modal distribution as the graph (Figure VIII: 8b - Frequency of Children by Age) suggests and we will therefore consider in the following chapter the heterogeneity of the group membership. For the moment, however, we will pursue the gross differences between the groups, looking for clues for a more rigorous analysis 'within' groups.

It would not be unreasonable to expect that where families were larger and the spread was wider, mothers would tend to be older. Yet although a significant difference did emerge in relation to mothers' ages, it was in the direction opposite from that which might have been anticipated. Mothers in Group I, where the largest families and the widest spread in the ages of the children were found, tended also to be younger than mothers in the other two groups.

/cont.

by Dr. Elsa Ferri at the National Children's Bureau, there was no significant difference in the family size distribution of children in fatherless and two-parent families, although there was a tendency for families in which the father had died or where the child was illegitimate to be smaller. There was no such tendency in families which were fatherless due to marital breakdown. A significant difference in family size was, however, found between families who were motherless and two-parent families. By definition, such families did not feature in our own sample.

Figure VIII: 8b

Frequency Distribution of Children by Age

Expressed as Percentage of the Group

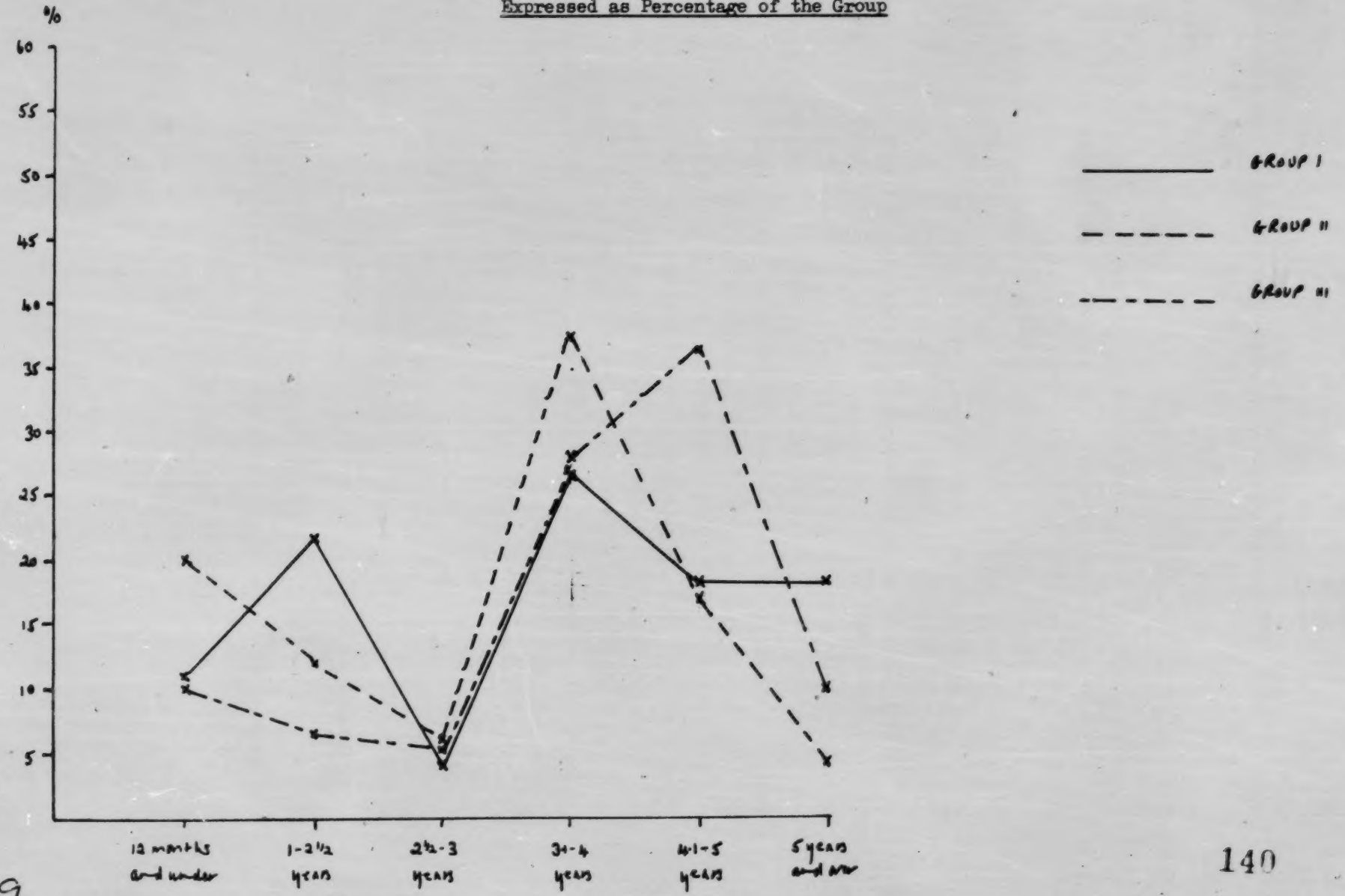


Table VIII: 9

Present Age of Mother by Group

Group	20 - 22	22.1 - 25	Over 25	Total
I No.	5	13	4	22
%	22.7	59.1	18.2	28.5
II No.	1	20	16	37
%	2.7	54.1	43.2	48
III No.	1	7	10	18
%	5.6	38.9	55.6	23.5
Total	7	40	30	77
%	9.0	52.0	39.0	100

x^2 value = 11.13 Df = 4 P < .025

From this, it is hardly surprising that mothers in Group I tended also to be younger when they had their babies.

Table VIII: 10

Age at which Mother had first Baby

Group	16-17	18-20	21+	Total
I	10	9	3	22
II	0	19	18	37
III	1	8	9	18
Total	11	36	30	77

x^2 value = 26.6 Df = 4 P < .001

Mothers were also asked whether they had planned their first baby; a question asked with some diffidence and one which it was thought might cause resentment or evasion. But the general response appeared to be more frank and forthcoming than had been anticipated; indeed, the information was often volunteered. It seemed that a greater proportion of mothers in Group I did not plan their first baby; 82%, as compared with 63% in Group II and 39% in Group III.

Table VIII: 11

Whether Mother Planned First Baby: by Group

Group	Mother Planned First Baby	Mother did not Plan First Baby	Total
I No.	4	18	22
%	18.2	81.8	28.5
II No.	14	23	37
%	37.8	63.2	48.0
III No.	11	7	18
%	61.1	38.9	23.5
Total No.	29	48	77
%	38.0	62.0	100

x^2 value = 7.77 Df = 2 P < .025

Despite the fact that four-fifths of them did not plan their first child, mothers in Group I seemed to have shared the same type of social background of other mothers in the sample. Their childhoods were, like those of mothers in the other groups, predominantly settled, and like the other mothers, they went to their local secondary school, and stayed in formal education until the age of fifteen or sixteen. None of them stayed until the age of seventeen or eighteen (compared with 3% of Group II mothers and 17% of Group III mothers) or subsequently went on to university (as contrasted with 6% of those in Group III). In spite of this apparent homogeneity, however, their lives after they left school tended to diverge from the pattern of Group II and III mothers. A larger proportion of them did not work between leaving school and having their first, probably unplanned, baby (73% had no job before becoming pregnant, compared with 54% in Group II and 56% in Group III); they therefore started their families younger. They were more likely to have had more children in fairly quick succession, although the group also included those mothers who had had another baby after the first one had started school. Interpretation of Figure VIII: 12 - Birth Patterns, is difficult as numbers are so small. The left hand column shows the total number of children in each of the birth patterns which occur in the sample. These are shown as a stroke denoting a child in the column appropriate for its age at the time of the survey. The frequency of each particular pattern for Groups I, II and III is shown in the right hand column by a cross for each family.

Figure VIII: 12

Birth Patterns by Group

No. of Children	Years of Age 1-	1+	2½+	3+	4+	5+	Group I	II	III
1				●			xx	xxxxxxxx x	xxx
1					●			x	xxxx
2	●			●			x	xxxxxxxxxx	xx
2				●		●	x	x	xx
2				●	●		x	xx	xx
2		●			●		xxxx	xxx	xx
2	●				●		x	xx	x
2			●		●				x
2					●	●	x	x	x
2		●		●			xxxx	xxxx	
2			●	●				x	
3		●		●		●		x	
3	●	●			●		x x		
3	●				●	●		x	
3				●		● ●	x		
3	●		●		●			x	
3	●		●	●			x x		
3		●		●	●			x	
5				●		● ● ● ●	x		

(Figure VIII: 12 -

see opposite)

The limited size of Group III families is apparent, together with a preponderance of four year old children (almost two thirds of the Group). It is most noticeable, however, that it is mothers with three year olds only or with one other very young baby who make most use of the provision (Group II). Where a three or four year old has a younger brother or sister who is just beginning to toddle, there then appears to be a cluster of mothers in Group I. But there is no more here than a suggestion.

As has already been described (Chapter VII), the general health of the sample was good. Health of mothers did vary between groups, however, though not significantly. There were more mothers with 'poor' health in Groups I and III and fewer with 'good' health in these two groups. This was perhaps not surprising in view of the possible strain of bringing up several under fives. Although also not significantly different, there was a greater number of 'pill takers' in Group III, possibly a reflection of stress in one-parent families. Although numbers were negligible, there were more speech defects among children in Groups I and III (of the total of seven cases, three were in Group I and three in Group III). The only mentally and physically handicapped children occurred in Group I; the nature of the handicap in these cases was not such that they could not have attended a pre-school playgroup or nursery. Indeed, this had been the advice of the Health Visitor, but it was advice that the mothers had not felt able to take.

Table VIII: 13

Mother's Health by Group

Group	Good	Average	Poor	Total
I No.	6	10	6	22
%	27.3	45.5	27.3	28.5
II No.	17	15	5	37
%	45.9	40.5	13.5	48.0
III No.	8	6	4	18
%	44.4	33.3	22.2	23.5

x^2 value = 3.09 Df = 4 P not significant

Size of family has been associated in numerous studies with poor health, low attainment and other educational disadvantages. Fathers' occupation has been thought to be an indicator, not only of income and the consequent standard of living, but also of the level of education or training and skills within the family, attitudes to education, child rearing, even the probability that children of manual workers are likely to weigh less and be shorter than those of middle class fathers.

In the "Hillcroft" study, the sample was heavily biassed in favour of working class parents. It was therefore decided to use the Hall Jones scale (Hall and Caradog Jones, 1950) instead of the Registrar General's Five Part Classification of Occupation, since it was partly based on prestige ratings and partly on sociological judgements and thus facilitated a distinction between manual and non-manual workers. Given the bias of the sample, it is not surprising that no significant differences between the groups emerged. A larger proportion, however, of those who made use of pre-school provision were in occupations requiring special training. Group III included 17% in non-manual occupations and proportionately fewer in the lower manual grades.

Key to Hall Jones Classification of Occupation

Class	Definition
I	Professionally qualified and highly administrative
II	Managerial and Executive
III	Inspectional, Supervisory and other non-manual (higher grade)
IV	Inspectional, Supervisory, and other non-manual (lower grade)
Va	Routine grades of non-manual workers
Vb	Skilled manual
VI	Manual - semi-skilled
VII	Manual - routine

Table VIII: 14

Fathers' Occupation by Group

Group	1 Parent N/A	I-IV	Vb	VI	VII	Unemployed	Total
I No.	1	0	12	2	6	1	22
%	4.5	0	54.5	9.1	27.3	4.5	28.5
II No.	2	5	18	6	6	0	37
%	5.4	13.5	48.6	16.2	16.2	0	48.0
III No.	5	3	4	4	2	0	18
%	27.7	17.0	22.2	22.2	11.1	0	23.5

x^2 value = 17.93 Df = 10 P not significant

Whilst not showing any significant differences between the groups, this table perhaps suggests the possibility of bi-modality within Group III; this will be discussed later. It also suggests that a larger proportion of parents in Group I were of lower occupational status and therefore might be expected to be in the lowest income groups and also be less sympathetic towards educational and long term goals. It is in this group that we would expect to find the least well off and where it would be most likely that mothers would be 'driven' to supplement the family income. After all, the provision, although subsidised by the Council, was not free; expense could still be a very real stumbling block, particularly in view of the larger than average families.

Table VIII: 15

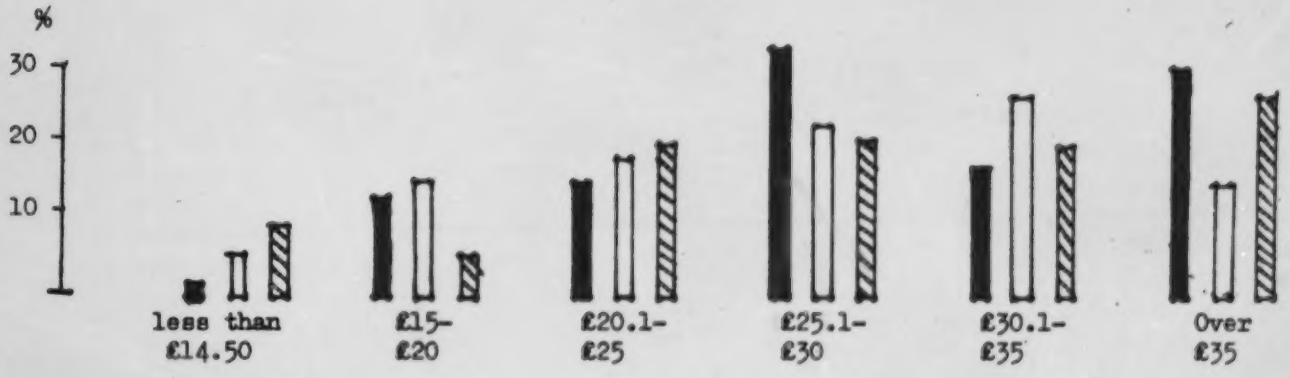
Pattern of Mothers' Employment since Marriage

Group	Stopped Work			Works					
	At Marriage	At First Child	At Second Child	Full Time	Part Time	At Home	'Occasional'	At Night	Evenings
I No.	6	10	1	1	1	1	0	0	2
%	27.3	45.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	0	0	9.1
II No.	6	17	2	0	8	3	2	1	3
%	16.2	45.9	5.4	0	3.1	8.1	5.4	2.7	8.1
III No.	2	3	0	3	6	0	1	0	3
%	11.1	16.7	0	16.7	33.3	0	5.6	0	16.7

It appears that in spite of the apparent lack of training and education, families' incomes in Group I compared quite favourably with those in other groups. It was in Groups II and III where mothers in the lowest income groups were to be found and where it was "necessary for mothers to work", that is, the one-parent families. There were, however, no significant differences.

Bar Chart VIII: 15

(Weekly) Income Levels of Groups I, II and III



Expense, then, does not seem to have been an operative factor in non-take-up of provision. The majority (82%) of mothers in Group I and 88% in Group II stated that money was not a problem. Taken as an economic indicator rather than a social or cultural one, ownership of a car or telephone showed no significant differences between the groups. (Approximately 60% in all groups had a car, but 56% of Group III had a telephone, compared with about 36% in the other two groups.)

There is, however, the further possibility that as more Group I mothers fell into the lower sociological grouping, it might be surmised that their attitudes to education might be different from those, found mainly amongst Group III, who had themselves stayed on at school. A measure of this assumption might be responses to questions about the raising of the school leaving age, about the relative importance of education for boys and girls, and their views on their own education.

Fewer mothers in Group I were positive as to the benefits of staying on at school and more of them immediately responded that it was "a bad thing". Not only were there more mothers in Group I who were opposed to ROSLA, but there were more who fell into the "don't knows" - which may have indicated that they had not thought about it, were not prepared to think about it or didn't really care much one way or the other. They seemed to feel that if a child were clever, he should be given the chance to "get on"; but there was a general scepticism about

the value of book learning, or rather an ambivalence towards it. Mothers wanted "the best" for their children, but this was seen in terms of a comfortable standard of living which did not depend on being "good at school" (reference: the income levels of Group I families).

Table VIII: 16

Mother's views on ROSLA

Group		"Good thing"	"Bad thing"	Doesn't know Doesn't matter	Total
I	No.	7	8	7	22
	%	31.8	36.4	31.8	28.6
II	No.	22	10	5	37
	%	59.5	27.0	13.5	48.1
III	No.	9	5	4	18
	%	50.0	27.8	22.2	23.4
Total	No.	38	23	16	77
	%	49.3	29.8	20.9	100.0

x^2 value = 4.76 Df. = 4 P not significant

When comparison is made between Groups I and II only, the difference assumes significance.

x^2 value = 4.78 Df. = 2 P not significant (5.991 required)

Another variable related to a mother's view of education was her opinion of the relative importance of education for boys and girls. Here again there was some evidence to suggest that Group I mothers felt that boys, as the potential breadwinners, merited greater emphasis on schooling. The contrasting view was more often expressed amongst Group III mothers, one of whom speaking, as she said, "somewhat bitterly", went to more extreme lengths than most in maintaining that education was more important for girls than boys since when they were left with both a family and the need to support it, they required skills not only to fulfil a dual role but to earn high salaries - a reflection of the plight of one-parent families.

Table VIII: 17

Mother's view on relative importance of education for girls and boys

Group		Education more imp. for boys	Education not more imp. for boys	Total
I	No.	12	10	22
	%	54.5	45.5	28.6
II	No.	15	22	37
	%	40.5	59.5	48.1
III	No.	7	11	18
	%	38.9	61.1	23.4
Total	No.	34	43	77
	%	44.2	55.8	100.0

x^2 value = 1.36169 - Df. = 2 P not significant

Mothers were also asked how far they were satisfied with their own education - whether they would change anything if they had their time over again, stay on at school or follow any special training. Although no significant differences emerged, it seemed that there was a trend for Group I mothers to be satisfied with life as it was or to express an almost stoical unwillingness to think about change. "What I say is, you make your mistakes when you're young and you're stuck with them. It's no good grousing." Group III mothers, on the other hand, were either more ambitious or in a position where acquisition of skills would materially alter their standard of living. Earlier attitudes to schooling and education had therefore changed and they regretted what were now seen as missed opportunities.

Table VIII: 18

Whether Mother would change Education if She had her time over again

(collapsed table)

Group	Would do same again	Pursue training	Leave school earlier	Total
I No:	12	7	3	22
%	54.5	31.8	13.6	28.6
II No.	22	12	3	37
%	59.5	32.4	8.1	48.1
III No.	4	11	3	18
%	22.2	61.1	16.6	23.4
Total	38	30	9	77
%	49.3	39.1	11.7	100.0

x^2 value = 9.05 Df. = 4 P not significant (9.488 required)

One way of looking at these three variables relating to views on education was to code responses to form a cumulative score. Such an 'aggregating' technique has the demerit of normally reducing variance and 'smoothing out' internal differences. Moreover, it has the objection that one is collapsing somewhat inconsistent data - a person's response to one question is not necessarily on the same dimension as his response to a second question; the assumption here is of a unidimensional model which is almost certainly a simplification of the true situation. Caution is therefore very necessary in interpreting such data and they can only be considered a rough guide. Given this caveat, responses were recoded to form a unidirectional score, the lower numbers denoting positive acceptance of ROSLA, a belief that education was equally important for girls as boys, as well as a desire to have had further training of some sort.

Table VIII: 19

Method of scoring 'attitude to education' cluster

Schedule No.	Variable	Score			Maximum
		No	Don't know	Yes	
3/18	Education more important for boys	1	2	3	3
		Yes	Don't know	No	
3/19	ROSLA a good idea	1	2	3	3
		More training	Satisfied	Leave school sooner	
3/23	Mother would do same again (training)	1	2	3	3

Scores on each variable for the separate groups were tabled and the means for each are shown in the table below:-

Table VIII: 20

Comparison of 'mean' scores

Group	Mean Scores			Mean
	Education more important for boys	ROSLA not a good idea	Mother's educ. satisfaction	Cumulative Score
I	2.13	1.86	1.90	5.90
II	1.75	1.78	1.45	5
III	1.88	1.5	1.6	5

Even though not statistically significant, it is striking that a consistent variation does appear; it suggests that Group I families regard the value of education rather less than others and taken in conjunction with the fact that Group I mothers did not pursue their own education, this may make us suspect that their values lie more in 'short term horizons' than in 'deferred rewards'.

It can be argued that aside from the question of material poverty,

which did not apply to Group I, the analysis so far has extracted a number of characteristics or trends suggestive of a 'culture of poverty' in that Group; particularly the truncated education and lack of specific training, early marriage, early and often pre-marital pregnancy, larger families and less concern with education and long term goals. In addition to these features, there was a striking proportion of mothers in Group I compared with the other groups, who were opposed to pre-school provision by the Council; they preferred the idea of provision run by the community, the tenants' associations or committee-run groups. It has been suggested in a number of studies (Lewis, 1961; Haggstrom, W., 1964) that a characteristic of the 'culture of poverty' is a feeling of 'us' and 'them' together with mistrust of, and antagonism towards, authority. There would seem to be some such ethos among at least some of the non-users of pre-school provision.

Table VIII: 21

Preferred Type of Pre-school Provision

Group	N/A	Committee of mothers	Community Group	Tenants' Assoc.	Council	Church	Owner Sup.	Other	Total
I No.	4	6	2	4	3	2	1	0	22
%	18.2	27.3	9.1	18.2	13.6	9.1	4.5	0	100.0
II No.	2	14	2	8	10	0	0	0	37
%	5.4	37.8	5.4	21.6	27.0	0	0	0	100.0
III No.	0	3	0	1	10	0	3	1	18
%	0	16.7	0	5.6	55.6	0	16.7	5.6	100.0
Total	6	23	4	13	23	2	4	2	77
%	7.79	29.87	5.19	16.88	29.87	2.59	5.19	2.59	100.0

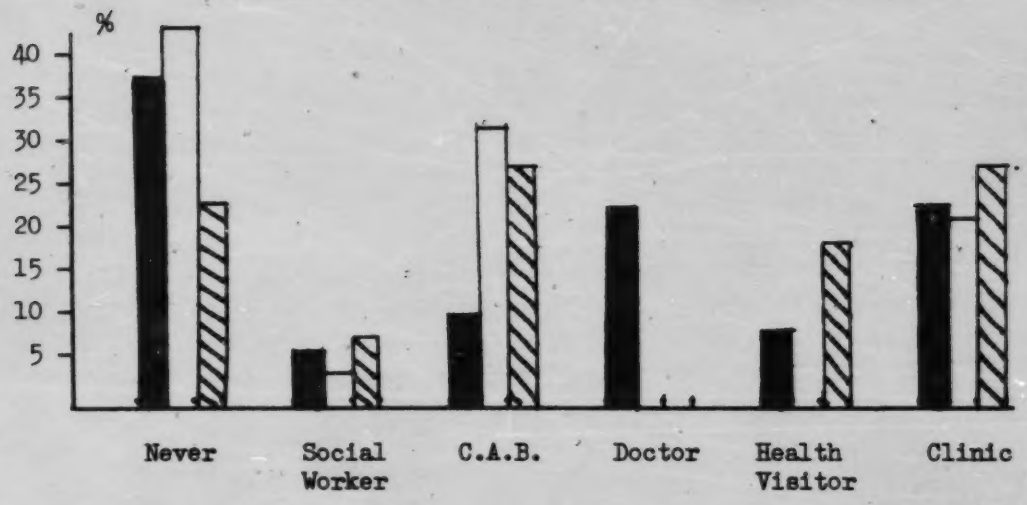
x^2 value = 28.76669 Df. = 14 $P < 0.01$

A similar interpretation could be put on the finding that when faced with an emergency or when they needed help, Group I mothers would be more likely to go to their doctors or clinic, as opposed to the Health Visitor or Citizens' Advice Bureau. Group III mothers were more likely to use the C.A.B. or the clinic. Here again, it could be argued that some mothers in Group I were displaying anti-authority characteristics - in their response to the C.A.B. for example. The contrast in the relationship felt between mothers and their doctors in Group I compared with the other

two Groups, was such that it was thought there must have been some misunderstanding in coding or interpretation of response. Random checks were made which indicated that the data displayed is accurate.

Bar Graph VIII: 22

Mother's Alleged Use of Official Bodies and Agencies



A possible explanation of this phenomenon is suggested in the sort of comments which punctuated the general conversation about use of 'outside' help. Firstly, there were those which expressed a mother's conviction that to ask for help from an agency like the C.A.B. was somehow a confession of failure: "I'd never go <u>there</u> (C.A.B.), that's for people who can't stand on their own feet. If we've got problems - and who hasn't? - we'll sort it out for ourselves and not go running to <u>them</u>." There was a dislike of anything that drew attention to possible problems; it seemed that to be seen going into an advice centre or for an official visitor to be observed at their door was undesirable. To go to the clinic, however, where anyone with young children could go without exciting undue comment, was easier; while the doctor offered complete confidentiality and a one-to-one relationship. The personality of individual doctors and welfare workers was also relevant in interpreting this finding; the names of particular doctors and health visitors recurred with comments like, "You can tell him anything and he'll listen", and "You don't feel a fool when you try to tell him something", "I can talk to her - she's got no side - when you meet her out shopping, she always stops and chats, not like that other one who.....I wouldn't have anything to do with <u>her</u>."

But there were also characteristics of Group I mothers which were not necessarily a feature of the 'culture of poverty'. Another element was the attitude of mothers towards their neighbours.

Table VIII:23

Mothers' Attitudes to Neighbours

Group	"Very Friendly"	"Keeps self to self"	"Doesn't Mix"	Total
I No.	8	9	5	22
%	36.4	40.9	22.7	28.5
II No.	24	10	3	37
%	64.9	27.0	8.1	48.1
III No.	5	10	3	18
%	27.8	55.6	16.7	23.5
Total No.	37	29	11	77
%	48.0	37.6	14.3	100.0

x^2 value = 9.20202 Df. = 4 $P < 0.05$

"Very friendly" meant that mothers chatted with neighbours, visited each other, baby sat and shopped together. Mothers who "kept themselves to themselves" would "say hello" and be willing to help in an emergency, but not invite neighbours in, or habitually "pop round". Mothers who "didn't mix" seldom, if ever, passed the time of day; they didn't know who their neighbours were and they didn't wish to become involved with them. Group III mothers are inevitably not to be interpreted in the same way as those of Group I or Group II. When Groups II and I are considered separately, although there is just no statistically significant difference between them, the tendency is for more friendly mothers to be found in Group II and the less integrated to occur in Group I.

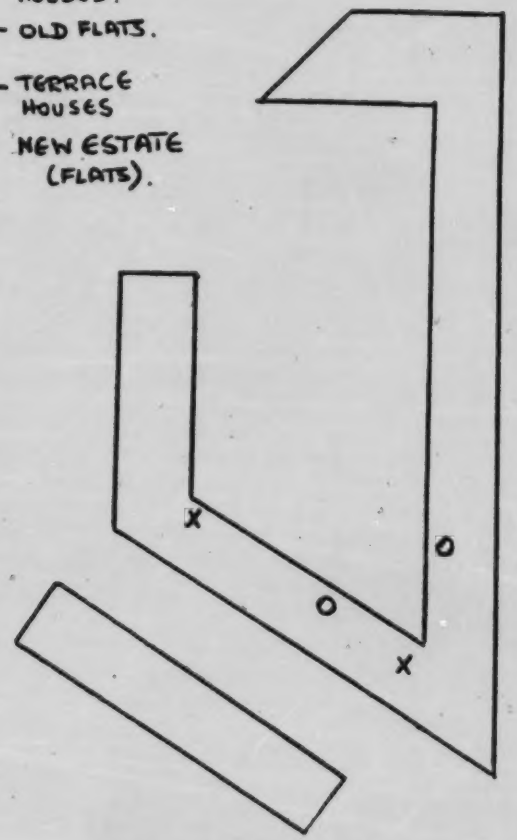
Group II mothers seem to have been more friendly than either Group I or Group III mothers; but a larger proportion of Group I was comparatively isolated within the community. This was revealed, not only on their alleged non-use of official bodies, already referred to, but also in the amount of contact with their own mothers and close relatives. Responses were coded according to whether they saw their mothers daily, had contact once or twice a week, once or twice fortnightly, once or twice a month, less often or 'other'. The table has been collapsed into 'close contact' (daily or once or twice a week), 'occasional contact' (the remainder) or 'other' (no contact with relatives and mother),(mother dead).

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF LOCATION OF FAMILIES BY GROUP.

Figure VIII: 25

GROUP I ○
GROUP II ×
GROUP III △

..... OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSES.
---- OLD FLATS.
——— TERRACE HOUSES
- - - NEW ESTATE (FLATS).



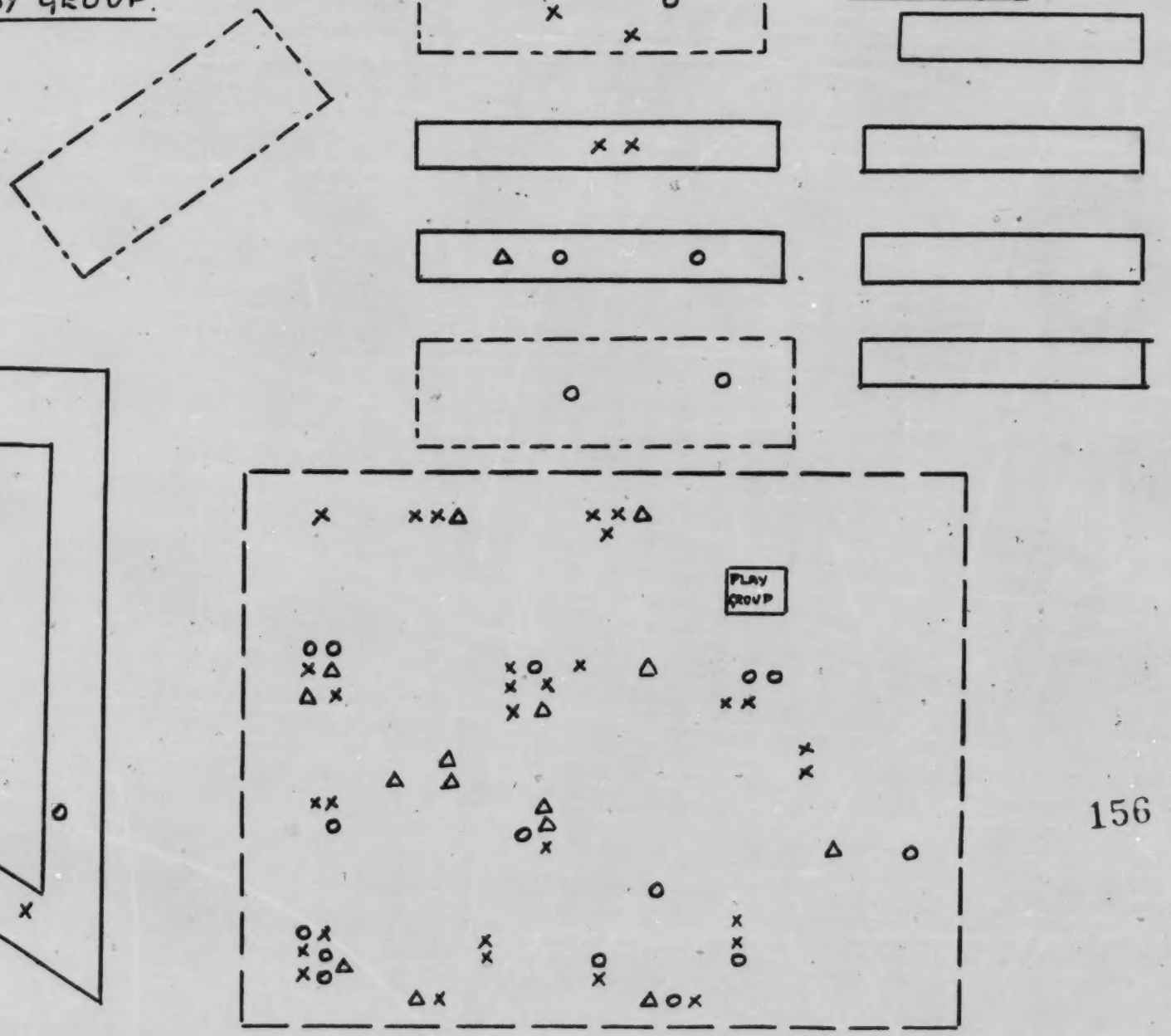


Table VIII: 24

Contact with Extended Family

Group	Close Contact	Occasional Contact	No Contact	Total
I No.	11	7	4	22
%	50.0	32.0	18.0	28.5
II No.	25	11	1	37
%	68.0	30.0	2.0	48.0
III No.	8	9	1	18
%	44.0	50.0	6.0	23.4
Total No.	44	27	6	77
%	57.0	35.0	8.0	100.0

x^2 value = 7.27 Df. = 4 P not significant

Although there is no statistically significant difference between the groups, it is evident that a larger proportion of Groups I and III mothers had less contact with close family than those in Group II, and there was no evidence to suggest that they had other close social contacts. The figures are so small that it is not possible to know whether it is simply a statistical quirk, but there is certainly a higher 'grandma' mortality rate in Group I, even though the mean age of their daughters is lower than those in Groups II and III.

It might be argued that feelings of isolation, or indeed use or non-use of provision might hinge on the location of a dwelling within the catchment area (Hillingdon Survey of Playgroups 1972). In "Hillcroft", there was no evidence to support this contention. No family not already using pre-school provision lived more than five minutes walk away from the premises. Distance was therefore controlled. Thus, greater emphasis was placed on the type of dwelling and, in the case of flats, on floor height. It can be seen from the map (Figure VIII: 25), 'Location and Type of Dwelling', that no particular pattern existed. It was, however, found that mothers with three and four year old children were more likely to be living in a ground floor flat or house ($P < 0.01$). Since all mothers in this category were interviewed, it suggests that this probably reflected Council housing policy.

This preliminary analysis by group has disclosed findings which shift the focus of attention for reasons for use or non-use of provision from expense,

location and need or desire to work, to aspects of family structure. The most outstanding of these are the size and spread of family associated with Group I mothers together with their early marriage and probably unplanned first pregnancy. In addition to these salient features of Group I mothers, there is some evidence which suggests trends, characteristic of each group. Some of these could imply a 'culture of poverty', notably the tendency to distruct authority, rejection of deferred rewards and a certain apathy in response. Others, an extremely insular attitude towards neighbours and a sense of isolation within the community, could perhaps more probably indicate some sort of 'stress' factor.

Table VIII: 26

Main Differences between the Groups

Characteristic	Group I	Group II	Group III	Significance level
1. Size of family	Larger			0.01
2. Spread of family	Larger			0.001
3. Present age of mother	Younger			0.025
4. Mother's age at birth of first baby	Younger			0.001
5. Planned first child	No			0.02
6. Attitude to neighbours	Less Friendly			0.05
7. Support for Council-run provision	Less Likely			0.01
8. One-parent family			More Likely	0.05
9. Working mother			More Likely	0.01

CHAPTER VIII

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CHAPTER IX

'The Alienation Factor'

In considering the variables contained in the interview schedule, those that showed little or no variance were assumed to be generally descriptive of the sample as a whole, and used for the basis of Chapter VII. These invariant variables accounted for some 150 of the total, leaving 70 indicating some significant variance. A search among these revealed some variables which discriminated among the three main groups within the sample, and these were discussed in Chapter VIII. The problem, given a relatively small sample and a large set of variables, was how to analyse the data further for 'within group' differences. One way ahead might have been to factor analyse the responses and try to isolate specific clusters of variables or 'factors' but, given the small sample and the recognised heterogeneity of the groups, this was not considered an appropriate strategy.

Instead, a preliminary cluster analysis was undertaken of Group III subjects (N = 18) in which individual families were plotted according to their responses on the whole range of 70 variables, and scattergrams drawn to explore the relationship of one variable with another on this small sub-sample. What this search revealed was that within Group III there existed a sub-sample of five families with shared characteristics whose responses were not only consistent amongst themselves but collectively different from other families in the Group. Two examples which illustrate this 'clumping' of the five families are shown below. In the first, the variable 'attitude to neighbour' is plotted against 'attitude to door knocking'. The resultant fourfold distribution shows the five families (marked as triangles) isolated in the top right quadrant, for families who neither welcomed a door-knocking approach nor mixed with their neighbours.

Table IX: 1a

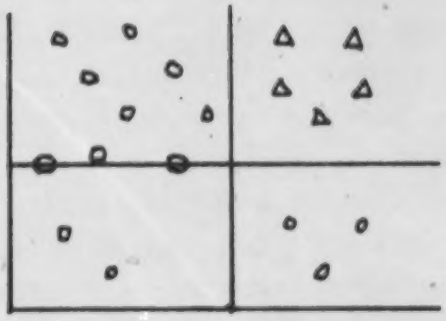
Clustering of possible sub-groups in relation to "attitude to neighbours" and "attitude to door knocking"

"Attitude to Neighbours"

Doesn't mix

Keeps self to self

Friendly



Yes No

"Door knocking welcome"

The second example of such a scattergram shows a plot of the variable "attitude to neighbours" with the variable "use of road as a play area for child" and demonstrates that the five families marked with triangles again fall together uniquely in the quadrant reserved for families who did not mix with their neighbours but did make use of the road as a playspace.

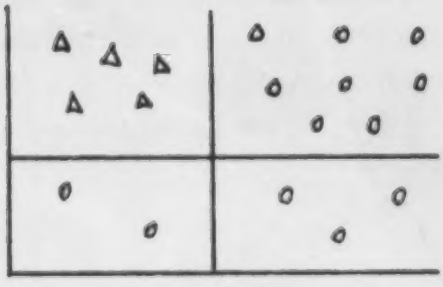
Table IX: 1b

"Attitude to Neighbours"

Doesn't mix

Keeps self to self

Friendly



Yes No

"Uses road"

"Attitude to neighbours" with "Use of road as play area"

By considering all the variables paired in turn, six were isolated as grouping these five families. They were:-

1. Dislike of neighbours (1/40 in the schedule)
2. Dislike of messy play (1/72)
3. Lack of child centredness (1/76)
4. Small time available for relaxed play (3/14)
5. Early age of marriage (3/29)
6. Little contact with mother or close relative (3/51 52 collapsed table)

The entire Group III sample was now considered in the light of these six variables. The 18 relevant subjects and their scoring on these six is given below.

(Table IX: 2 - see page 4)

As always with non-parametric data, a decision as to when to amalgamate scores was difficult to make. In order to substantiate the use of these six variables, a Kendall Coefficient of Concordance was calculated, giving a value for $W = 0.403$, with an $x^2 = 41.106$ and $df = 17$, $P < 0.0001$. Such a high W score suggested that the six variables were measuring much the same characteristic among the members of the sample, and consequently the scores on these variables were added to produce a single, total (T) score.

Using this new, Total score as a measure, other variables were tested against it to see whether the battery could be extended. In particular, attention was focussed on one, a subjective rating of mothers' relationship with their children during the course of the interview. Interpretation of this rating was fully discussed by the two interviewers during the field work and a number of cross checks made by visits by both workers to the same mother on different occasions. More important, ratings were made before the interviewer knew whether or not a mother would make use of the provision. It was clearly understood that this was not a culturally-orientated assessment; it turned on the stability and warmth of the mother-child relationship, as reflected by what she said, how she said it, her gestures and facial

Table IX: 2

Raw Scores for Group III Mothers on Sub-set of Six Variables

Subjects	Dislike of neighbours	Dislike of messy play	Lack of child centredness	Small time available for relaxed play	Early age of marriage	Little contact with mother or close relative	Total
	(Variable)						
1	1	1	2	1	2	2	9
2	1	1	1	1	2	1	7
3	1	2	1	2	2	1	9
4	2	2	1	2	2	1	10
5	1	1	1	1	2	3	9
6	2	2	1	1	3	2	11
7	2	1	1	1	2	1	8
8	3	2	1	3	3	1	13
9	2	2	1	1	2	3	11
10	2	2	1	1	3	2	11
11	1	3	1	2	2	1	10
12	2	1	1	2	1	3	10
13	2	1	3	3	1	3	13
14	2	2	1	1	2	3	11
15	3	3	3	3	2	1	15
16	2	3	3	3	2	3	16
17	2	3	3	3	2	3	16
18	3	3	2	3	2	1	14

expressions.

Key to the mother-child relationship scale

Score 1: indicated the mother who, though not necessarily well educated, coped confidently with the new situation. Perhaps she explained to her child that she 'wanted to talk to the lady for a while' and suggested various occupations or simply cuddled him. She would respond to his questions in a matter-of-fact way, interrupting the conversation with the interviewer when she felt her intervention was called for. When her child was 'naughty', she might slap him or 'tick him off', but she was basically in control of herself and her child. She was more likely to be collaborative ("let's show the lady your bedroom - where you play") than restrictive ("go and play in your bedroom while I'm talking; I can't do with that mess in here"). She would leave the door open so as to give free access and keep an eye on her child if he were playing in an adjoining room. This type of relationship implied an easy, fairly relaxed partnership between mother and child and was the norm for the sample.

Score 2: Mothers categorised in this way fell into two groups: subjects in both were judged 'less mature' than those described in the section above. Firstly, there were those who appeared tense in a new situation, inclined to be over-supportive to the child; for example, giving lengthy and complicated explanations about the tape recorder which were quite beyond the understanding or interest of a three or four year old, yet insisting that he held her hand when going upstairs "because you might fall". Such lack of relaxation and confidence seemed to affect the child and there was a sense of strain about the relationship.

Then there was a second group who appeared under-supportive and took the quickest way they could to keep the child quiet without any real regard to what he needed. One mother, typical in her reaction, seized a handful of iced lollies from the freezer and thrust them upon her son. "Here you are then!" and, with a sigh, "That'll keep him quiet". Soon puddles of melting lollies and sticky fingers demanded her attention; she alternated offers of crisps and biscuits with scolding him for "making a mess". Score 2 mothers, then, while wanting the best for their child, displayed a certain lack of competence.

Score 3: These mothers shared some of the characteristics of the 'bribing'

mother described above, but their relationship with their child appeared less stable, even tenuous. The mother's needs were divorced from her child; it was a mother in this group, for example, who said that she couldn't be bothered to make a meal most days, even though she knew her child was hungry. Another mother, who said she was not ill, was still in her dressing gown in the afternoon slumped in front of the television with the previous day's pots and pans in the sink; she said that she didn't know where her child was - he'd been out all day, but would turn up sooner or later. Tension for her was evidently reduced if he were elsewhere ("he's not a bad boy; he's out all day - rain or shine").

When mothers were ranked on this subjective, three-category, one-directional measure, and the rankings were correlated with those on the total scores for the other variables, it generated a Rho = 0.69, P $<$0.01. It was therefore decided to add this measure to the battery, to produce an increased total score.

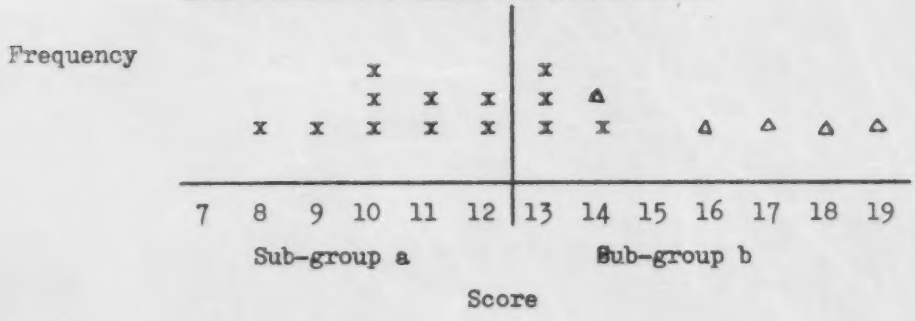
Although many other measures were considered at this stage, considerable difficulties were encountered. Other variables employing a three-category, one-directional scale posed problems of compatibility. At what level of significance can ordinal scales justifiably be collapsed? Bearing in mind the dampening effect of tied ranks when calculating correlation coefficients - and in three-category scales there are many tied ranks - it was decided to set the relatively high margin of a 0.01 significance level; at this level no other candidates offered themselves for inclusion in the battery.

Other variables which seemed to bear great promise were, however, only on two-category scales, and hence created other difficulties of compatibility. It was therefore decided at this stage to limit the battery to the seven three-category variables mentioned above, and to proceed with the analysis using this 'cluster' as a basis.

Table IX: 3

Distribution of Group III subjects

on seven combined variables (battery)



Considering the distribution of Group III mothers on this table, we see that the five families which were the focus of the analysis and are represented by a triangle in the table, fall to the right of the median of this distribution. Graphically, the median of 12.5 partitions the set of subjects into two sub-groups.

Mothers whose scores fell to the right of the median were mainly 'mothers alone'; although most of them seemed to cope quite well, they were subject to considerable pressures and had problems to contend with which did not figure in the conversation of 'low scorers'. One mother explained how she had to get her child ready for the day nursery before she went to work herself. "She needs clean clothes every day and there's the washing and that ..... There's the housework to do when I get home at night - I don't even bother cooking a meal ..... I just don't feel like it." Another mother, even though at home and living on social security, also could not summon up enough effort to cook a meal; "I haven't cooked a meal in months - sometimes we go round me mum's but we don't get on." Yet another said they were "up to our eyes in debt"; her husband, it turned out, was

a gambler and the reasons for her edginess and increasing apathy were not hard to understand.

One further point was that while 11 out of 18 mothers in Group III had chosen to use pre-school provision and had taken their own steps to seek out the means, the other seven had been the subject of some type of intervention on the part of health visitors, social workers or doctors who had been instrumental in getting their child to playgroup or day care. Five out of the seven mothers who were the subject of such intervention had scores which fell to the right of the median; that is, they were 'high' scorers. Such a distribution of 'interventionist' mothers among the distribution produced an $x^2 = 4.14$, df = 1 and $P < 0.02$, thus further supporting the premise that Group III mothers comprised at least two distinct sub-sets.

Given that 'high scorers' among Group III mothers, those falling to the right of the total score of battery of seven variables, predominantly used pre-school facilities following intervention on their behalf by an external agency such as a social worker, doctor or health visitor, it could be argued that those who proved 'high scorers' amongst Group II mothers, and therefore shared certain characteristics might also differ in other important respects from 'low scoring' mothers in Group II. Furthermore, it could be postulated that mothers to the right of this distribution were more likely, possibly as a result of various pressures combined with the lack of social support, to be among those who dropped out of using the playgroup or who were irregular or reluctant users.

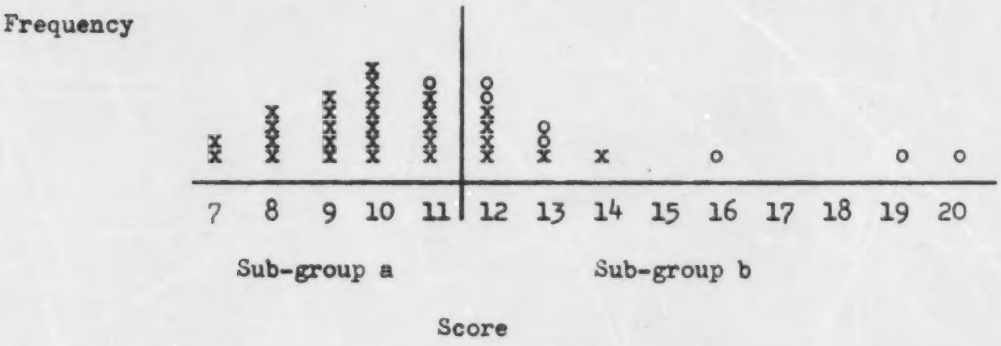
Checks were made twice during the course of the first term as to who was attending and the reason for non-attendance. Strikingly, the only changes which occurred concerned children whose mothers' T-scores fell to the right of the median, and particularly those whose mothers had high scores on this measure. One family had moved out of the district; another had said they were moving but had not done so and had made no attempt to return to the playgroup. Two further children, it was understood, were starting school, but had not in fact done so. Three children left after a few weeks because of alleged difficulties with other children in the group. One child, although still on the register, was an irregular attender. Altogether, there were eight families whose children could be classed as 'reluctant users', in Group II. Seven of

these had mothers whose T-scores fell to the right of the median. The probability of this distribution of 'reluctant users' having occurred by chance was calculated by a simple x^2 test, giving with one degree of freedom, $x^2 = 6.25$, $P < 0.02$.

Table IX: 4

Distribution of Group II subjects over seven variables (Battery)

(circles indicate those who were 'reluctant users')



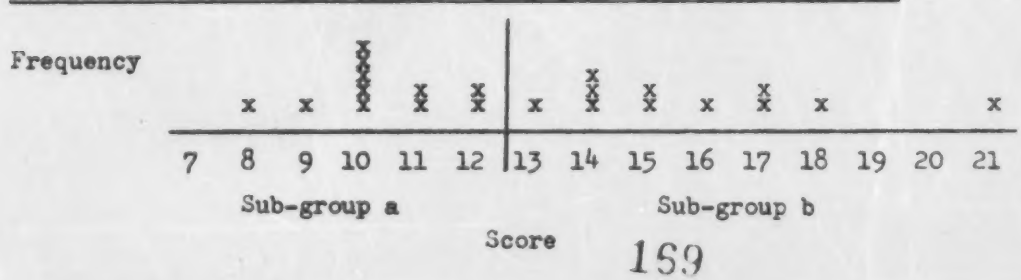
Just as the T-score seemed to differentiate between mothers in Group III who used pre-school facilities only at the instigation of some external agency, so, among Group II mothers, the T-score appeared to differentiate between those who used the provision purposefully and those who, although they made some initial use of it, eventually dropped away. On the face of it, therefore, the T-score represented a potentially important diagnostic tool; given that this score was concerned with variables which might be described as aspects of 'stress' or 'alienation', it suggested further that such characteristics were closely related to the uptake and use of pre-school facilities.

No direct link, of course, has been proved between the two; only that high T-scores seem to coincide with external agency intervention or 'reluctant' usage.

Finally, the question arose how mothers in Group I would be distributed, using this same scale of measurement. The relevant distribution is given below:-

Table IX: 5

Distribution of Group I subjects over seven variables (Battery)



It was clear from the three distributions above that the seven-variable score, used as a single scale, bisected the total sample into two major sub-groups, called, for the purposes of discussion, 'A' (to the left of the median: the low scorers) and 'B' (to the right of the median: the high scorers). High scorers or B sub-groups in Groups III and II were defined not only by response to the key variables, but were also characterised as predominantly having made use of pre-school provision following intervention of an external agency, or of being 'reluctant users' of pre-school facility. There was no such behavioural criteria for Group I families.

Having considered each of the three original groups in turn, it was possible to summarise the results, as shown in the following table; as means and medians were virtually the same, the mean was taken as the measure of central tendency.

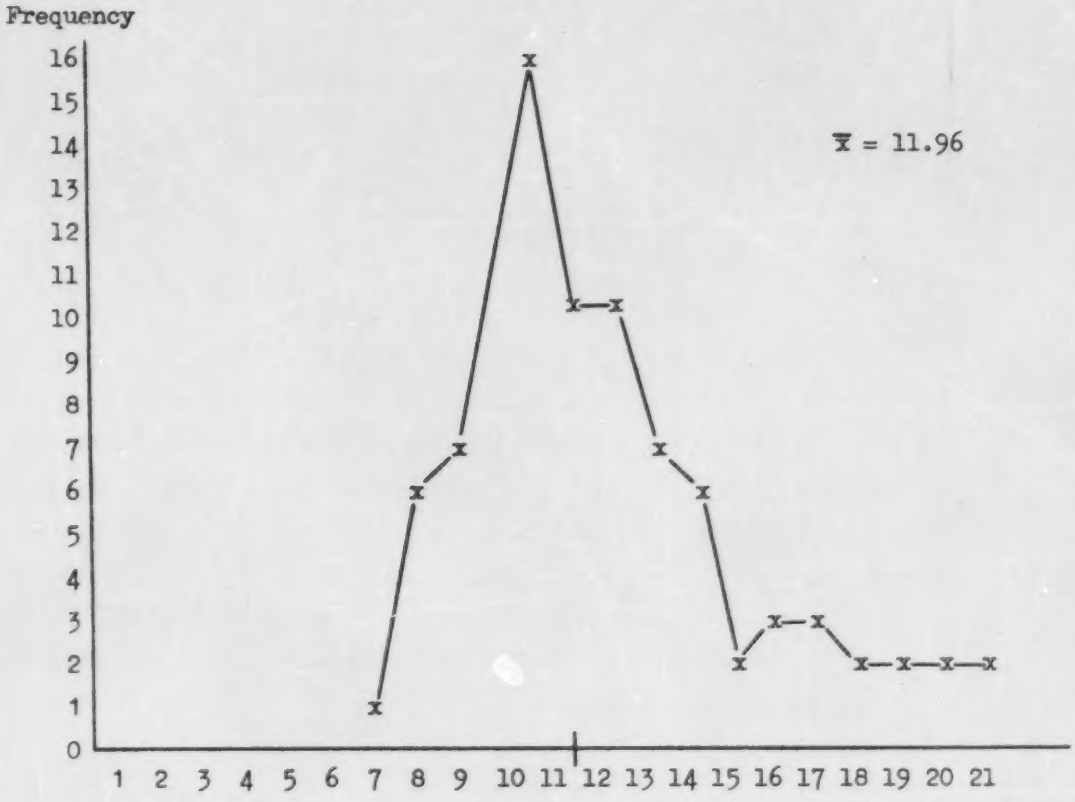
Table IX: 6

Group and Sub-group means of distributions on the Battery of seven variables

Group	Group Mean	Mean of sub-group A	Mean of sub-group B
I N =	12.77 (22)	10.27 (11)	15.72 (11)
II N =	11.08 (37)	9.58 (24)	13.84 (13)
III N =	12.77 (18)	10.2 (9)	15.22 (9)

Table IX: 7

Distribution of the sample on
the Battery of seven key variables



On preliminary analysis, therefore, it appeared that the group of seven variables did partition the total sample. The next issue was to discover how closely related they were when considered in relation to the sample as a whole. A correlation matrix over the 77 subjects gave the following values.

Table IX: 8

Correlation matrix of the Battery of seven key variables

Dislike of neighbours	1.00					
Dislike of messy play	.25	1.00				
Lack of child-centredness	.47	.24	1.00			
Small time available for relaxed play	.24	.27	.39	1.00		
Early age of marriage	.26	.26	.24	.29	1.00	
Little contact with extended family	.17	-.01	.35	.18	.16	1.00
Mother-child relationship	.25	.33	.37	.29	.37	.26

From this it seemed that most of the variables had some positive, though not high, relationship with one another; it was noticeable that 'contact with family', although correlating with 'child-centredness', made least contribution. A principal components factor analysis of these variables, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, suggested, as shown below, that all variables loaded on one factor, accounting for 83 per cent of the variance.

Table IX: 9

Factor loadings of the seven key variables

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Dislike of neighbours	53	06
Dislike of messy play	46	39
Lack of child-centredness	71	-28
Small time available for relaxed play	52	06
Early age of marriage	49	17
Little contact with extended family	38	-34
Mother-child relationship	60	10
Pct. of variance	83.4	16.6

Since the battery of seven variables had been developed originally from an analysis of Group III mothers only, the possibility existed that when the total sample was considered, other variables might also qualify for inclusion in the battery. But at this stage, it was thought sufficient to suggest that such a 'factor' existed, and that its character was to bisect the whole sample in such a way that separated those who were 'reluctant users' of pre-school facilities, and those who used them only in an 'interventionist' manner, from those who used them more positively. The initial group of variables comprising the 'factor' - dislike of neighbours, dislike of messy play, lack of time available for relaxed play, lack of child-centredness, early marriage, little contact with mother or extended family, coupled with an immature relationship between mother and child - suggested that those mothers who scored highly on such a factor were under some degree of stress or possibly suffering from some measure of alienation, both from their own immediate family and from the community at large.

Given the three original groups based on behavioural criteria related to pre-school take-up, and the 'alienation factor' bisecting the total sample, the analysis, at this stage, had created six sub-groups out of the total of 77 families.

Table IX: 10

Sample by sub-groups

	Sub-group A	Sub-group B	Total
Group I	11	11	22
Group II	24	13	37
Group III	9	9	18
Total	44	33	77

Differences between the three main 'behavioural' groups have already been considered in Chapter VIII. The next question, which followed on directly from the development of the 'alienation factor' and the two major sub-divisions created by it, was whether and how families in all the 'A' sub-groups together, differed from all those in the 'B' sub-groups. Which, among all the variables in the study, might be considered as additional components of such a factor?

Further Chi Square analysis was therefore calculated for all

variables, with the total sample divided into two - all the 'A' sub-groups labelled Group A, and all the 'B' sub-groups, Group B. This did indeed indicate some other significant differences, but there were also some notable exceptions. These are set out below:-

Table IX: 11

Variables which showed marked variance between the three major 'behavioural' groups or in the sample, but which did not achieve 'significant' levels of difference between A and B groups

Variable	Comment
1. Family size	Associated with Group I (larger)
2. Spread of family	Associated with Group I (wider)
3. Present age of mother	Associated with Group I (younger)
4. Whether mother planned first child	Associated with Group I (unplanned)
5. Support for Council-run provision	Associated with Group I (reluctant)
6. Working mother	Associated with Group III
7. Known to social worker	Associated with Group III B
8. Use of official bodies and agencies	Associated with Group I (Doctor); with Group III (CAB, Health Visitor and Clinic)
9. Whether education is more important for boys	
10. Views on ROSLA	
11. Attitudes to pre-schooling (verbal expression)	

As can be seen from the Table above, use of social services, contact with social workers and the clinic, was known to be associated with Group III B mothers; but these variables did not reach 'significant' levels of difference when all 'B' sub-groups were considered together. The largest families in the total sample were found in Group I B, but family size did not emerge as an important characteristic of the B group. Nor did this group show the reluctance to support Council provision which might have been anticipated by the response of Group I which opted for provision or administration by a committee of mothers. Indeed, when Bs are taken as a group, 40% would prefer Council-administered provision, as compared with 20% of Group A mothers.

In addition, a group of variables, all of which seemed in some

way or other connected with a mother's view of education, did not achieve significant levels of difference between the three major groups, nor between the two groups under scrutiny here; they nevertheless showed considerable variation over the sample as a whole and may therefore contribute another factor which sub-divided the sample in quite another way.

Focussing now on those features which characterised the A and B Groups, Table IX: 12 (see page 16) sets out the variables which achieved 'significance' together with their probability levels. The starred variables are those in the 'Battery of Seven'. Scores on these seven variables were the criteria for division of the sample into Groups A and B; those with low scores (below the median) were placed in Group A and those above in Group B. One of the seven variables does not figure in the Table. This is the subjective assessment made by the interviewers of the mothers' relationship with their children; it was not included because, unlike the others, it was not the mother's own response, but a subjective rating of it.

A further set of variables is given in the Table below; these nearly reached significant levels and are included because they serve to fill out the picture that is emerging of the background and attitudes of the respective groups.

(Table IX: 13 - see page 17)

Table IX: 12

Differences between A and B Groups

(i.e. when the sample is divided on the Battery of seven key variables)

* = Battery

Variable	df	x^2	Level of significance	Interpretation A	Interpretation B	
1. Whether one-parent family	1	3.94	P < .04		more likely	
2.* Age mother married	4	13.72	P < .008		married younger	*
3. Age first child born	4	14.03	P < .007		teenage mother	
4. Family income	5	11.13	P < .04		lower	
5. Mother's health	2	8.19	P < .01		poorer	
6. Father's health	3	7.76	P < .05		poorer	
7. Annual holiday	5	11.99	P < .03		less likely	
8. Evening activities	4	9.87	P < .04		more TV; fewer books; no hobbies	
9. Whether parents go out together regularly in the evening	5	13.32	P < .02	less likely		
10. Whether wife goes out separately	5	12.52	P < .02	more likely		
11. Husband helps with shopping	2	7.36	P < .02	more likely		
12. Husband helps with housework	2	5.72	P < .05	more likely		
13. Husband helps with cooking	2	5.64	P < .05	more likely		
14.* Contact with family & friends	2	8.63	P < .01		less frequent	*
15. Attitude to area	3	15.47	P < .001		dislike	
16. Attitude to accommodation	3	10.96	P < .01		dissatisfaction	
17.* Attitude to neighbours	2	15.94	P < .0003		alienation	*
18. Member of Tenants' Assoc.	2	13.28	P < .001		unlikely	
19. Willing to help on Mother Rota	2	6.92	P < .03	more likely		
20. Willing to make/mend toys for playgroup	2	10.51	P < .005	more likely		
21. Willing to help prepare mid-morning break	2	6.23	P < .004	more likely		
22. Use of roadway as a play area (unsupervised)	2	11.82	P < .002		more likely	
23. Use of car park as a play area (unsupervised)	2	6.14	P < .04		more likely	
24. Takes child swimming regularly	2	7.18	P < .02	more likely		
25.* Attitude to play	2	19.38	P < .0001		uncaring or intolerant of 'messy play'	*
26. Child uses finger paints	1	5.02	P < .02	more likely		
27. Child uses dough or pastry when mother bakes	1	5.83	P < .01	more likely		
28.* Mother's attitude to child	2	11.67	P < .002	integrated in family or comes first	child comes last	*
29. Whether mother threatens	4	9.07	P < .05	with 'father'	with stick or police	
30.* Time available for relaxed play	3	11.94	P < .007		little/no time	*

Table IX: 13

Difference between A and B Groups approaching significant levels

Variable	df	x^2	Significance	Interpretation A	Interpretation B
1. Father's occupation	8	13.53	P < .09		No higher classification
2. Father's training	6	11.23	P < .08		Less training
3. Father's use of evening classes	8	13.52	P < .08	More likely	
4. Mobility of father (childhood)	2	7.33	P < .06		More mobile
5. Reason for going out to work when child reaches five	5	10.15	P < .07	Interest	Money
6. Whether mother would have her life the same way again	2	5.18	P < .07	Yes	No
7. Central heating?	1	2.95	P < .08	More likely	
8. Car?	1	2.80	P < .09	More likely	
9. Whether mother feels she can cope	4	10.90	P < .09		Less likely
10. Dental visit in last 12 months	1	3.21	P < .07	More likely	
11. To whom would mother go for help?	6	11.48	P < .07	Mother or neighbours	Husband or mother; <u>never</u> neighbours
12. Whether objected to door knocking	2	5.42	P < .06	Unlikely	More likely
13. Whether objected to leafleting	2	4.99	P < .08	Unlikely	More likely
14. Whether used library (story time)	1	3.10	P < .07		Less likely
15. Desired provision	4	9.00	P < .06	Compulsory at four	Disagree with it or "enough places for those who want them"

Division of the total sample on the criteria of the Battery of Seven Variables and a subsequent analysis of it on the basis of the distribution, brought into focus a number of variables which were earlier thought to be relevant, but which it was not possible to include with

justification in the main battery since they were two-category scores. These resulted in so many tied ranks that normal correlation procedure was not recommended.

This definitive and comprehensive list of variables which emerged from the Chi square analysis; relates to four main facets of family life. Firstly, family structure; secondly, socio-economic background; thirdly, the degree of isolation/alienation felt by the mothers, and finally, differences in attitudes towards the child and its perceived needs.

One-parent families were concentrated in significant numbers in Group B, as were those mothers who were 'significantly' younger when they married and had their first child. The preponderance of one-parent families no doubt contributed to the finding that family income among B mothers was lower and that more of them would go out to work for money, whereas Group A mothers professed a desire to do so to meet others or for 'outside interest'. When 'mothers alone' were excluded from the analysis, however, incomes among B mothers were still lower than among the A Group. Even more striking was the finding that when only two-parent families were considered in variables where the husband or father played an integral role, there apparently existed a different life-style or balance in the 'partnership of marriage' between the two groups. In Group A families, husbands were more likely to share the general cooking and shopping: although fathers in both Groups took responsibility in looking after the children, A Group husbands also made it possible for their wives to go out on their own regularly and to have a break from household routine. It was less likely, however, that both parents would go out together once or twice a week, whereas B Group parents were more likely to do so. Group A parents were more stay-at-home - they enjoyed more home-based activities such as do-it-yourself, reading and hobbies, while Group B parents watched more television and no-one in this group said they had a hobby.

Mothers in Group B had married younger and had their first child earlier than those in Group A; it followed therefore that they had less work experience before marriage. As has already been mentioned, size of family did not achieve significance when considered in relation to A's and B's; but fathers' training, their occupation and the use made of evening classes, all showed a trend towards the advantage of Group A

fathers. Educational background of B Group parents was therefore more truncated than that of A parents and this was perhaps reflected in the differences in the leisure time activities of the two Groups, referred to above. The more passive activities of B Group parents could also be linked to the finding that both mothers' and fathers' health were reported as poorer among Group B.

Fewer mothers in Group B saw a dentist regularly; this could be due to disregard of the importance of dental checks, but it could also be due to expense. More than one mother in Group B volunteered that she saw to it that her child went to the dentist, but although she knew she ought to go herself, she kept putting it off "because of the expense". There were, of course, other practical difficulties involved - waiting for buses, the cost of transport, the need to find someone to look after her child or to take him with her. Lower incomes may also have contributed to fewer B Group parents taking an annual holiday and to their being less likely to have central heating or a car. Although all flats were supplied with central heating, not all tenants availed themselves of it.

Another group of variables appeared to reflect depression and alienation from family and friends. These included dislike of the area, accommodation and neighbours - particularly characteristic of B Group mothers. They were also less welcoming to people calling at the door, less likely to be members of the Tenants' Association - or even to want leaflets put through their doors. In this Group too were those mothers who least wished to become involved in playgroup activities - this applied not only to the mother on her own, who was obliged to work and was therefore not free to participate, but also to the mother who was unhappy or overburdened, for whom the prospect of involvement seemed just another chore - as well as those few who disagreed with any form of pre-school provision.

Although differences did not reach statistically significant levels, isolation felt by Group B mothers was apparent from their response to the question, "To whom would you turn for help in the long term?" Reliance on their own mothers was characteristic of A mothers while those in Group B seemed to depend more on their husbands. Most noticeable, however, was the fact that none of the Group B mothers said they would turn to friends or neighbours for help. All those mothers who had lost their own mothers by bereavement were in Group B, but this gap

did not appear to have been filled by contact with other relatives or friends.

Mothers were also asked whether, if they had their time over again, they would change their lives in any way. Responses suggest that mothers in Group B were less happy with their present existence than those in Group A. Given the opportunity, 54% of B mothers compared with 32.5% in Group A, wished they "had done otherwise" and would like a different life.

A striking finding related to a number of variables centred on mothers' attitudes to their children. There was almost the same proportion in both Group A and Group B for whom the child 'came first'; the majority of children were 'integrated' in both Groups, but there were no children who 'came last' in the A Group. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that there were 'significant' differences in attitudes to play. Understanding and tolerance of messy play, use of finger paints, dough, or playing with pastry when mother was baking, were more frequently found among Group A mothers. The latter were also more likely to take their children swimming regularly in summer and to show greater reluctance to allow their under-fives to play in roads and car parks without supervision. In contrast, Group B mothers had little or no time for relaxed play with their children during the daytime; when children were naughty, more Group B mothers were likely to 'threaten' them, and those mothers in Group A who did make use of an outside deterrent, were more likely to say 'father' would punish them, whereas Group B mothers threatened with a stick or the police.

To sum up, the key variables which pinpoint families in Group B suggest they are likely to be one-parent families and those in a low income bracket, that one or both parents will be suffering from ill-health and apart from their extended family, alienated from their neighbours and under considerable pressures for a variety of reasons. These pressures militate against the likelihood that they will enjoy their children's company and in some cases apparently result in them being so preoccupied with their own problems as to be oblivious of those of their children.

These two major sub-groups represented in the six cells shown in Table IX: 9, and discussed here, are defined by the three major behavioural groups and the division created by the post-hated 'alienation' factor. Variables encompassed within such a 'factor', however, although

probably forming the core, do not account for all the variance between the six sub-groups. A more extensive analysis, focussing on each of the six sub-groups in turn will form the subject of the next chapter, where it is hoped to describe all the variables within the study which contribute towards an understanding of the sample as a whole.

Analysis of sub-groups: the six cells

Having described the general characteristics of the sample, considered the three major sub-groupings within it, and explored the second major division caused by the 'alienation factor', it is now possible to consider the individual characteristics of the six cells created by these sub-divisions, and in doing so, to focus on those variables which, although they have appeared to be the characteristic of one or other group, have also shown some tendency towards bi-modality.

This can perhaps best be illustrated by considering the evidence on family size within the sample. It was pointed out earlier (ch. VIII pp 5,6,7) that larger families predominated in Group I, the group which made no use of pre-school facilities. At the same time, it was not clear, from considering the distribution of families between groups alone, just where these differences occurred. Now, by considering this variable in terms of the six cells, and by comparing the distribution of family size with the other relevant variables, it is possible to obtain a much clearer picture of the situation.

Table X: 1

Size of Family in relation to the Six Sub-groups

Group	Family size: (number of children)			
	1	2	3	5
1a N =	2	5	4	0
% =	18.2	45.5	36.4	0
1b N =	0	8	2	1
% =	0	72.7	18.2	9.1
11a N =	7	15	2	0
% =	29.2	62.5	8.3	0
11B N =	3	8	2	0
% =	23.1	61.5	15.4	0
111a N =	1	6	0	0
% =	14.3	85.7	0	0
111b N =	6	5	0	0
% =	54.5	45.5	0	0

x^2 value = 22.8 Df = 15 P < .086

On the face of it, it could be argued that there is very little difference between Sub-groups 1a and 1b, that the existence of one very much larger than average family in group 1b has a disproportionate influence in so small a sample. All this is true; nevertheless, when the table is considered in relation to the 'present age of mothers'and 'whether they planned their first baby', the distributions suggest that there are fundamental differences between the two sub-groups masked by the common factor of having larger than average for the sample families. The tables below set out in graph form both family size and the present age of mothers for Sub-groups 1a and 1b; from these, we see that only nine per cent of Sub-group 1a, as compared with 36 per cent of Sub-group 1b, fall in the 18-19 age range. The distributions of both sub-groups are skewed, one showing a bias towards older mothers in Sub-group 1a, those who have already substantially completed their families, whereas in Sub-group 1b, the bias is clearly towards younger mothers.

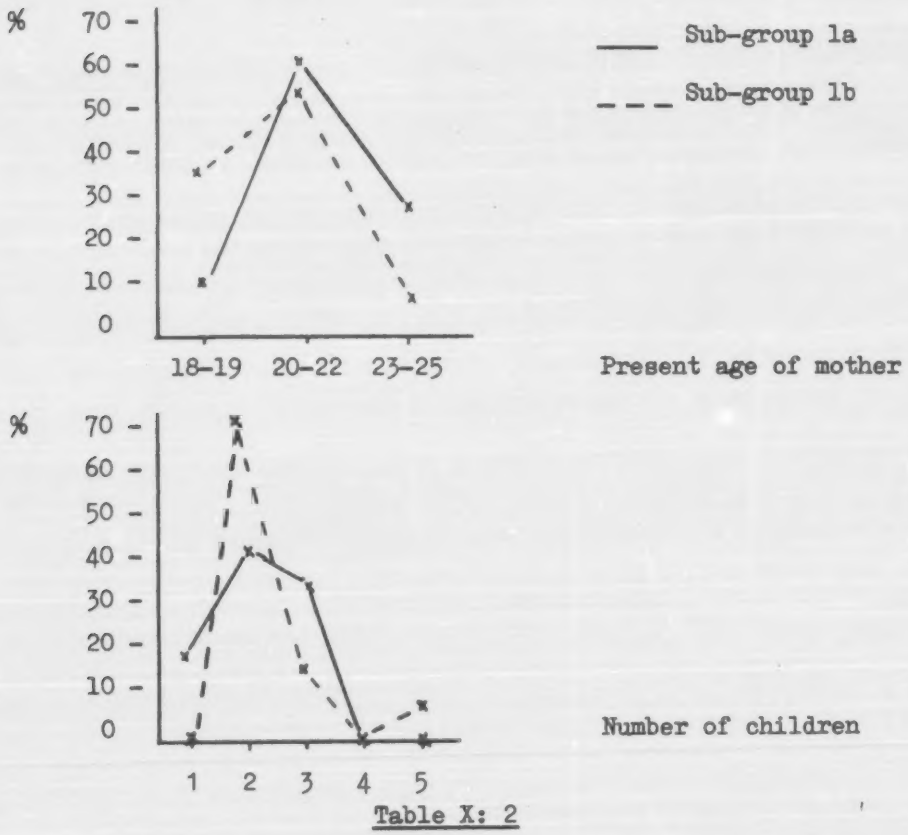


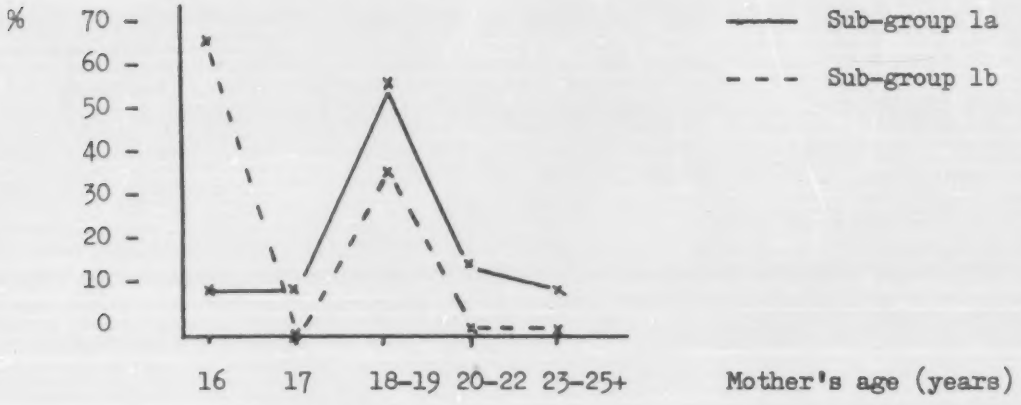
Table X: 2

Size of Family and Present Age of Mothers for Sub-groups 1a and 1b

Yet although Sub-group 1b is biassed in favour of younger mothers, there are no one-child families. In spite of their youth at marriage, mothers have gone on to have another child in fairly quick succession to the first, and they still have more child bearing years ahead of them than those in Sub-group 1a. A different pattern also emerges when the 'age mother married' is considered.

Table X: 3

Age Mother Married for Sub-groups 1a and 1b only



Although the two sub-groups have larger than average families for the sample, there are nevertheless very different patterns in the way these have increased. Mothers in Group 1a were older when they married and had their first child, whereas all mothers in the b Sub-group had married and/or had their first child by the time they were 20; and a striking number of them did so when they were 16. Grounds for believing that different attitudes towards marriage and child bearing obtain in the two groups are strengthened by consideration of whether or not a mother had planned her first child, that is, anticipated marriage.

Table X: 4

Whether mother planned first child (six sub-groups)

Mother planned first child	Sub-group						
	1a	1b	11a	11b	111a	111b	Total
Yes N =	4	0	10	4	4	7	29
% =	13.8	0	34.5	13.8	13.8	24.13	37.7
No N =	7	11	14	9	3	4	48
% =	14.6	22.9	29.2	18.75	6.25	8.3	62.3
Total	11	11	24	13	7	11	77
	14.3	14.3	31.2	15.9	9.1	14.3	100.0

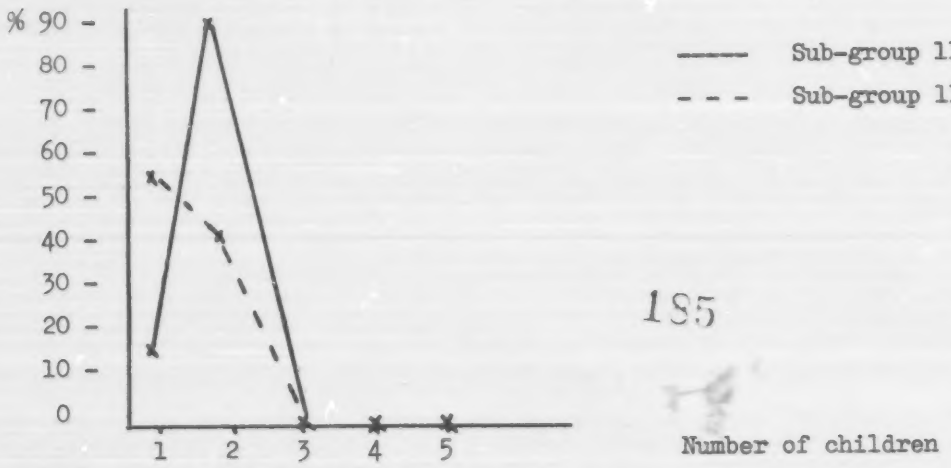
$x^2 = 11.3$ Df = 5 $P < .04$

It is evident from the table above that many mothers in the sample were pregnant before they married and from the willingness with which information was given, that for the majority, no particular significance was attached to this. However, it is noteworthy, especially in view of their youth, that 100 per cent of mothers in Sub-group 1b fall in this category.

Comparison between the major behavioural groups showed that in contrast to Group I, mothers in Group III had the smallest families. There was a possibility therefore that use of pre-school facilities, from a purely practical or economic standpoint, was a function of size of family. Examination of the two sub-groups within Group III, however, throws additional light on those who already made use of pre-school provision.

Table X: 5

Size of Family (Sub-groups 111a and 111b only)

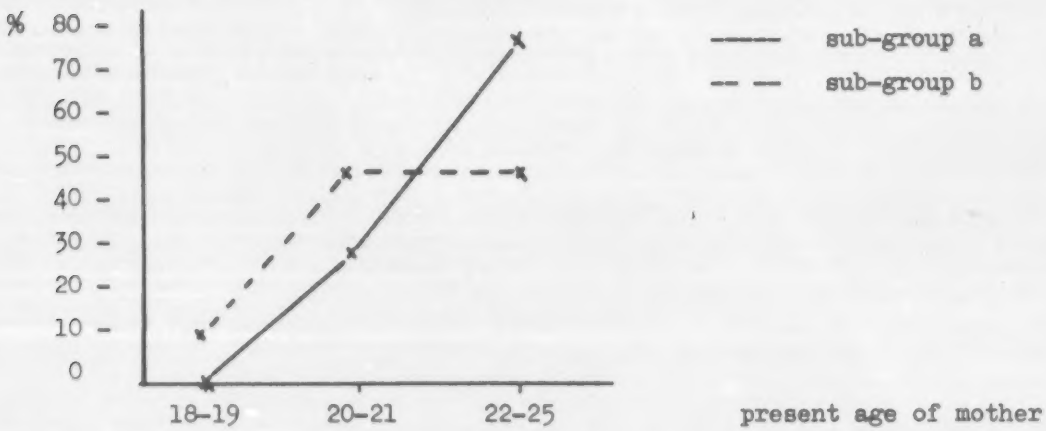


Underlying the characteristic of Group III of the small family, from this graph we can see that the one-child families are concentrated in the b Sub-group, where one-parent families also predominated. In contrast, a very high proportion of those mothers who, on their own initiative, had taken their children to playgroup or other provision, had two children in the family. Sub-group IIIa therefore more closely paralleled mothers in Group II regarding size of family, than had previously been thought. From all this, it can be seen that although all the mothers in Group I behaved in the same way towards the uptake of pre-school provision, their characteristics in terms of family size, planning and attitudes are in fact very different.

Further striking contrasts emerge when the age of mothers is examined:-

Table X: 6

Present age of mothers: sub-groups IIIa and b only



Mothers in Group III were, on average, older than mothers in the other two major groups, but clearly, within Group III itself, mothers in the a sub-group were older than those in the interventionist group. Yet as Table X: 7 below shows, 71 per cent of sub-group IIIa mothers, as compared with 45 per cent of those in sub-group b did not marry before 20.

Table X: 7

Age mother married (six sub-groups)

Sub-group		Age					
		16	17	18-19	20-22	23-25+	Total
1a	N	1	1	6	2	1	11
	%	9.1	9.1	54.5	18.2	9.1	14.3
1b	N	7	0	4	0	0	11
	%	63.6	0	36.4	0	0	14.3
11a	N	0	3	7	9	5	24
	%	0	12.5	29.2	37.5	20.8	31.2
11b	N	0	2	7	4	0	13
	%	0	15.4	53.8	30.8	0	16.9
111a	N	0	0	2	4	1	7
	%	0	0	28.6	57.1	14.3	9.1
111b	N	0	2	4	3	2	11
	%	0	18.2	36.4	27.3	18.2	14.3
Total	N	8	8	30	22	9	77
	%	10.4	10.4	39.0	28.6	11.7	100.0

$x^2 = 52.2$ Df = 20 $P < .0001$

Nevertheless, the ratio of children per family was marginally higher in sub-group IIIa (see Table X: 8); this probably reflects the stability of the two-parent family and the truncated marriage of mothers on their own.

Table X: 8

Ratio of children to family for each of the six sub-groups

	Sub-group					
	1a	1b	11a	11b	111a	111b
Ratio of children per family	2.18	2.45	1.80	1.90	1.86	1.40

Mention both of one parent families and of size of family and the knowledge that both these groups in the population at large suffer from financial hardship, raises the question of the economic pattern within the sub-groups. Here again the relevant table does not show any 'significant' differences between them, yet it throws some light on the underlying structure of the six cells.

Table X: 9

Weekly income for the six sub-groups

Sub-group		Weekly Income					
		£14.50 or less	£15-£20	£21-£25	£26-£30	£31-£35	£36+
1a	N	0	0	2	5	1	3
	%	0	0	18.2	45.5	9.1	27.3
1b	N	0	2	1	2	2	4
	%	0	18.2	9.1	18.2	18.2	36.4
11a	N	0	1	4	7	6	6
	%	0	4.2	16.7	29.2	25.0	25.0
11b	N	2	3	2	2	4	0
	%	15.4	23.1	15.4	15.4	30.8	0
111a	N	0	0	2	2	0	3
	%	0	0	28.6	28.6	0	42.9
111b	N	1	1	1	2	4	2
	%	9.1	9.1	9.1	18.2	36.4	18.2
Total	N	3	7	12	20	17	18
	%	3.9	9.1	15.6	26.0	22.1	23.4

$x^2 = 26.7$ Df = 25 P not significant

Any discussion of income levels is complicated by the rate of inflation in the last few years. Constant readjustment of what might be considered a living wage has been required. Mothers in this sample were interviewed in the summer of 1973 when prices were rising, but before the oil crisis and major increases in the cost of living. Only those

receiving less than £20 a week said they found it excessively difficult to manage, apart from a few cases where there was some particular difficulty peculiar to that family. Bearing this in mind, the earlier finding that mothers in Group I (those with the largest families) were among the most well off was substantiated. But fathers in the a sub-group were more likely to earn an 'average living wage', the mode being £26-£30 a week, whereas those in the b sub-group were biassed towards the higher income group with a mode of £35+.

Group III, on the other hand, was found to include the lowest incomes of the three major groups. as well as the highest; this bi-modality is accounted for in the distribution of the two sub-groups of Group III. The a sub-group has the greater proportion of high incomes (£36 or more weekly), that is the only professional people in the sample. Approximately the same proportion of lower paid people fall in the three lowest income categories in both sub-groups IIIa and IIIb, with a bias towards the very poorest in the b group. The sub-group which now shows the most striking bi-modality, however, which was not readily discernible when discussing the major group, is sub-group IIb. There were no parents earning more than £35 a week in this group, but although the majority earned £30-£35 weekly (31%), nevertheless, 43% received £25 or less and 38% £20 or less. This suggests that if there is one sub-group which would be inhibited from using pre-school facilities for financial reasons, it would include some parents in sub-group IIb.

The key tables relating to family structure and economic background have been examined first because, although they do not reveal any statistically 'significant' differences between the sub-groups, they nevertheless help considerably in our understanding of the ways in which these basic factors vary within the sample, when it is broken down into sub-groups.

It is against this background as well as the analysis of the previous chapter in which the characteristics shared by all the a sub-groups and all the b sub-groups were discussed, that the particular variables unique to each of the six cells will be considered. This present analysis, which covers all variables in the schedule, will therefore exclude any variables which have already been associated with any of the three major behavioural groups or the two principal sub-groups, group A and

group B, unless they are particularly characteristic of any one of the six sub-groups.

Group Ia

Table X: 10

Variables uniquely associated with mothers in sub-group 1a

Variable Number	Variable Name	Significance Level
I/65	Daily use of the park in summer	.009
/66	Regular use of swimming baths in summer	.008
II/58	Mother willing to take a course, if necessary, and assume responsibility in pre-school provision	.04
/77	Playgroup enables child to practise balance and co-ordination	.0009
III/38	Mother would work part-time during school hours once her child started school	.0009
/43	Mother most likely to seek advice from her doctor, rather than any other official body	.01

The question now was whether these variables made sense in terms of the families in the sample. In discussing them therefore, it was helpful to go back to the tapescripts and the personal notes made at the time of interview, to see whether what mothers said substantiated the data or was at variance with it.

Enjoyment of children's company permeated the conversation of mothers in sub-group 1a. 'I'm one of those women, I enjoy having children around me'; and another, 'If anyone's going to play with my children, it's going to be me.' They had some social life themselves, and the children were integrated in it. 'We go round to a friend's who's got a garden about three times a week, and then on Tuesday and Thursday, I'm shopping down the town. We take them out a lot in the evenings though, to the woods or somewhere.'

Such remarks, typical of the sub-group, were clearly compatible with the finding that mothers were unique in making daily use of the park in summer and enjoying regular outings to the swimming baths. Further light was thrown on their life-style, in that the smallest proportion of mothers (36.4 per cent) of any sub-group said they watched television regularly and the largest proportion of them fell in the

'hardly ever watch television' category (27.3 per cent). Their social integration was also underlined by the fact that 90 per cent of mothers called upon relatives for babysitting, compared with about 53 per cent in all the other sub-groups.

At first glance, the two variables which distinguished mothers' attitudes to pre-schooling, seemed rather odd in view of their not using provision - namely, willingness to take a course and assume responsibility and the importance attributed to the playgroup as enabling a child to practise balance and co-ordination. Both characteristics could stem from mothers' awareness of the possibility of playgroup or other pre-school provision and their conscious decision against it. Should the need arise, they were quite confident in their own capabilities and competence to assume responsibility. Indeed, this was exactly what they were already doing. Of the list of various aspects of playgroup practice (Grid), balance and co-ordination appeared to be the only novel idea for them. It was the only point on which they consistently asked for clarification. All other aspects they found either of no overwhelming importance, or of great importance, but such as could be equally or better handled in the home. One mother put it this way: 'The little girl upstairs goes to one (playgroup), and her mother told me to go along with her to see what I thought of it. But I didn't think it was all that good. The kids didn't seem to want to do anything, although they'd got plenty of amenities there. I find when I've had children in they just like to dress up and sing songs and that kind of thing, but there, they just let them get on with their own thing. The boys played with cars, the girls with necklaces, some with prams and painting - that kind of thing. If all they are going to do is play with cars and things, they might just as well be at home.' This same mother was very emphatic that she would never permit water play and referring to pastry, dough and plasticine, said, 'Oh, I never let them get hold of <u>that</u>.' A very few mothers in sub-group 1a did seem to be excessively houseproud, but most were warm, caring people who had weighed up the case for pre-school provision, and, for them, found it wanting. They wanted their children at home and felt they could give them everything necessary.

They were not isolated - most had family in the vicinity, but several voiced their dislike of school and this may have influenced them in their desire to keep their children out of any associated

activity, for as long as possible. 'What I say is, they start school quite soon enough at five.' Most had quite enjoyed school, however, wanted their children to enjoy it too and were confident they would do so. Mothers were well able to cope; they had no real money worries. It is possible that they had been so cushioned economically speaking and so supported by their families that circumstances which would result in mothers in other sub-groups seeking advice from 'the welfare' or the Citizens Advice Bureau, were beyond their experience. The only real crisis of which they could conceive was related to health; therefore they thought first of their doctor.

The main difference between these mothers and others in the a sub-groups appeared to be that those in Sub-group 1a had decided that they were 'happy as they were' and for a variety of reasons, chose not to make use of the provision. As one said, 'It's hard to explain. I suppose I'm being a bit selfish on her behalf, really, but when she goes out to play there are quite a few rough children and they fight, and I didn't know whether she would be any better off at play-school or better where I could keep an eye on her. Also, carrying the baby, it would be difficult to get there and once he comes it will be just one mad rush until we get a system going. Then, I thought, well, she's four now and all being well she'll be at school next year.....' Another put it this way: 'I'm quite happy. If you're on your own, and you've got to go out to work then it's different; you've got to put them in a nursery or something like that, but if you're at home, then I don't see any need for it until they are older.' It was only when children reached the statutory school age at five that mothers in Sub-group 1a would consider the possibility of going out to work and then only if the hours would enable them to be at home when their children came home from school and during school holidays.

Group 1b

Table X: 11

Variables associated with mothers in sub-group 1b

Variable Number	Variable Name	Significance Level
1/34	Neighbours considered unfriendly	.0001
2/22	Use of library for communication (none)	.07
/25	Use of library (none)	.005
/50	Qualifications required in a supervisor (none)	.04
/68	Importance of playgroup in developing readiness for later school work (little importance)	.0006
/71	Importance of playgroup for mothers to obtain advice from other mothers and supervisors (no importance)	.07
/73	Playgroup attendance enables mothers to understand children better (disagree)	.007
/76	Playgroup enables child to listen and talk to other people (no importance)	.05
/78	Playgroup enables child to learn through play (lowest priority)	.02
/80	Playgroup enables child to gain lasting educational advantage (no importance)	.002
3/29	Age mother married (young) 16-17	.0001
/31	Present age of mother (young) 20-22	.03
/32	Age of mother when first child born 16-17	.0007
/33	Whether mother planned first child (unlikely)	.04
/54	Annual holiday in form of 'days out'	.02
/73	Mother's health (poor)	.03

The two recurring themes in conversations with this sub-group of mothers were first, their withdrawal from the community and secondly, their distrust of anything 'educational'. Reluctance to get involved with others meant that these mothers were among the most difficult to reach initially; when, eventually, they agreed to talk, their comments were punctuated with remarks like: 'We keep ourselves to ourselves...', 'we've learnt by experience, it doesn't do to be friendly.....'., 'there's no one'd talk to you here.'

Apathy and fear seemed to underlie much of what was said - 'All I want 'em to do is to sit down and watch telly. I just can't cope with

them. I know it isn't right, but there you are.' This mother, like a strikingly large proportion of mothers in sub-group 1a, had three children under five; she, however, was certainly not enjoying their company. She said the doctor had tried to get her to take pills, but she had resisted the suggestion. 'You've got to soldier on and put up with it.....I think now I've made a terrible mistake (marriage), but I'm stuck with it.' One might have thought that a playgroup was just what this mother might have appreciated. In theory, she did: she was not one of those who did not 'approve of pre-school provision' - on the contrary; but she was not able to make the initial effort to get there or to face the additional strain of meeting new people.

Mothers in this sub-group were likely to have left school as soon as they could; marriage was seen by them, at that time, as highly desirable, but many of them appeared to have been precipitated into it without any real idea of what it involved. They were still clear, however, that school had nothing to commend it. Although not significant at this level, mothers in this sub-group were more likely to consider education more important for boys, 'as they would be the breadwinners', but their underlying attitude towards education seemed to be one of distrust and dislike. Speaking of her schooldays, this mother was fairly typical in her reaction: 'I know I didn't like it at all.....I hated exams - if you're like me, and at the end of an hour there was nothing written down, well.....you know, it was all there, it just went. It was terrifying. It frightens you. Especially the quiet, when you're not allowed to talk and you're not allowed to look round the room.'

Not unnaturally, mothers looked back to their childhood experiences and both pleasant and unpleasant associations influenced their thinking of what was or was not desirable for their children. Learning and by extension places or objects associated with it like playgroups or libraries, were seen as irrelevant and to be avoided. Interestingly, this same mother, who had so hated and feared school to the extent that her attitude to pre-schooling was antagonised by it, had a completely different childhood experience of dentists. 'I remember, when I was little, I had to have an awful lot done, and I had a really good dentist. I had an accident with my teeth when I was about three. He was really

good; I had to have gas and he wouldn't put the thing over my face because he thought it would frighten me, so he used to take the thing off and wave the tube around in front of me.' This mother was almost unique in the sample in saying: 'I think they ought to have a check up, say, every six months. So that they wouldn't be frightened when they did have to go.'

But it was not always associations with the past that influenced mothers. They could be caught in a vicious spiral of events which resulted in them cutting themselves off from activity outside the home and withdrawing with their children, into it. Shortage of ready cash and the strain of coping with several under-fives most probably explained the sub-group's 'poor health' and the likelihood that they would take their annual holiday by odd days out. But such an observation does not adequately convey the way in which mothers were often trapped between circumstances and their own legitimate desires. One mother, for example, said she had needed to go out to work for financial reasons. But she 'didn't find it a good thing.....I don't like the idea. I had no one to look after him, so he had to go to the day nursery. Although they were very good and it was very well done - for Johnnie, I don't know whether it's the same for all children, well, I wasn't his mother in the end, if you know what I mean. I was just a weekend drudge or whatever you like to call it, and anything I said, he just wouldn't do. The girl down there who used to see him all week was more his mother than I was. He got so tired and so did I. I took him away and he was back to normal within a week.'

But having taken the step because she felt it was right for her child, this mother was under considerable personal strain; apart from being 'bored with the children and house and things', she found it difficult to make ends meet. 'I cut out on things, I can't manage at all; I cut out on meat and fruit - I get it once a week when I have money and by the end of the week, I'm broke and just can't afford it. I cut out on food because you've got to pay rent and bills.' Her husband was 'one for the cards' and they were behind with HP debts; 'I sometimes wonder why I bother at all.' This mother, too, who might have benefitted by the new provision did not make use of it. In spite of her

admitted financial limitations, she did not want a free service and felt that mothers who wanted the provision should be willing to pay something towards it. For herself, it was no longer 'worth the bother'.

Sub-group IIa

Table X: 12

Variables associated with mothers in sub-group IIa

Variable Number	Variable Name	Significance Level
1/35	Attitude to neighbours (very friendly)	.0007
2/12	Heard of playgroup through tenants' assoc.	.002
2/55	Willing to serve on mother rota	.05

Mothers in this sub-group showed a marked contrast with those in the last group discussed by their open, friendly attitude both to each other and their initial response to the interviewer. They were among the first to know all about the proposals for a playgroup on the 'neighbours' grapevine', as well as through the tenants' association magazine. Boredom often dogged these mothers; 'Come in,' would be the usual greeting to the interviewer, with the door opened wide from the first moment. 'Time is something we've got plenty of,' or, 'It's you - I met you round my friend's - remember?' or, 'No need to come back later; come in now, kettle's on!' They were well organised and after housework was done, enjoyed a cup of coffee in each other's flats or playing with their children. Some mothers in this group felt isolated within their 'block', but had particular friends or family nearby. Their feelings were perhaps voiced by the mother who said, 'I'd like something for the mothers, because we get so lonely and we don't make friends that easily. If only we had somewhere we could go and sit and know there was someone else to keep an eye on the children.'

As well as welcoming the idea of a playgroup, most of these mothers would also welcome an informal 'club' for mothers with younger children, perhaps with occasional talks, but mainly 'come as you go'. Circumstances permitting, mothers in this sub-group were eager to take an active part in the proposed playgroup. However, they were often diffident about their own capabilities and would need encouragement to participate. They did not appear keen to go out to work: 'I wouldn't go out to work

unless I was really desperate', or, 'Perhaps a little job between ten and two when he starts school, but I wouldn't leave him before then', or again, 'It would be nice to have enough for some new clothes and not baby talk all the time, but they're only yours until they start school, aren't they, and I don't want to miss a minute'.

Perhaps it should be stressed that the same mother could change in her attitude over quite a short period. Another mother, for example, talking about whether, if there were provision for her children to be looked after all the time, she would make use of it, said, 'I wouldn't now, but I have been back to work since I had my little girl, when she was eighteen months old. I wouldn't leave them now, but at that time I needed to go back. She was looked after by a child minder because I was so low and cheesed off being at home.' (She had married at 18 and was already pregnant.)

For these mothers, then, involvement in the playgroup made very good sense.

Mothers were willing to make an effort for something they considered beneficial for their children. They did not wish 'just to be rid of them'. 'If he went all day, I'd be even more bored. Come to think of it, one or two mornings a week is all he needs.' Indeed, they were likely to have organised the flat for the children's play as well as for their own convenience. 'The thing is, their bedroom is a perpetual junk heap. They've got two big toy boxes but you'll find there are more toys out of it than in it. But I let them do what they like in there. I decorated their room, but it wasn't worth it, because she gets a bit pencil happy on the walls. But I think, well, if it's a rainy day then they are confined in here, and that's it. I think to myself, well, they're going to get out of that stage, so why not let them? There's usually a bit of a fight about who's going to clear it up and who's going to do this and who's going to do that, but I end up doing it anyway. They can do what they like in there.....they can have any friends in there, I don't mind. There's always children in, especially during school holidays. Other children know I let them do what they like in their bedroom and they like it. The times I've been in there and the beds have been stripped off with the mattresses on the floor, and they've been having gay times. But

I think, they're happy and it keeps them out of my way if I'm trying to do something, and then I get less agitated. We're all happy that way.'

Perhaps this feelings of these, the mothers who welcomed and made use of playgroup provision on their doorstep, were best summed up by a playgroup committee member-to-be, who said: 'I want the playgroup for her, not for me - it wouldn't hurt for two hours a day - it gets them ready for school. I'm willing to pay. Fifteen pence is quite cheap. I can afford six shillings a day - neither of us smoke - or I'd give something up.'

Sub-group IIb

Table X: 13

Variable Number	Variable Name	Significance Level
2/47	Distance prepared to go for desired provision (shortest)	.01
3/59	Whether parents go out together regularly in the evening (likely)	.02

The most striking thing about mothers in this sub-group was that although they gave high priority to playgroups, they said they were prepared to go the shortest distance of any group of mothers for such provision. Yet, when a playgroup was available nearby, although they made initial use of it, they did not, as a group, persist. There is very little, however, which emerged from this analysis, to distinguish them as a sub-group; naturally, they shared the characteristics common to the B sub-group and discussed in the last chapter. The only other variable which singled them out from the other sub-groups was the regularity with which parents went out together in the evening. This should, perhaps, be linked to the table X: 9 which revealed that nearly half the sub-group were low paid workers. Some of the remarks made by mothers in the tapescripts suggest that they felt stifled and frustrated by the struggle to make ends meet and that their temperamental response to their situation was to 'get away from it all' (meaning the flat and children) at least once a week or 'to break out and have a mad binge'. One mother said: 'We sit and look at the four

walls and we can't stand it a minute longer. We know we shouldn't, but we've just got to get out and go somewhere, anywhere.....' It is a matter for conjecture as to where this unsettled attitude has its roots. One possibility might be a link between the reported greater mobility in childhood of both parents than those in any other sub-group. This did not reach a statistically significant level, but it was a striking fact that less than one third of fathers and mothers in this sub-group, as compared with approximately two thirds in all other groups, had a settled childhood. One further point is that these parents said they usually got a friend or neighbour to baby-sit for them. Although there were no systematic data collected and it may have been coincidence, visits where it was either known or suspected that children had been left alone without babysitters, were to families in this sub-group. The apparent indifference of mothers in this group was typified by the mother who said: 'I wouldn't lift a finger to send her (her three and a half year old); but if the other kids go over there, I expect she'll tag along too - I'm not having her here (the flat) all day, that's for sure.'

Sub-group IIIa

Table X: 14

Variables associated with mothers in Sub-group IIIa

Variable Number	Variable Name	Significance Level
1/66	Use of swimming baths in summer (likely)	.008
1/73	Finger paints used	.002
1/74	Large brushes used	.02
2/25	Mother uses library	.005
2/47	Distance prepared to go for desired provision (furthest)	.01
2/76	Playgroup 'of very great importance' for child to listen and talk to other adults	.05
3/20	Age mother left school (older)	.06 (not sig.)
3/21	Age father left school (older)	.002
3/28	Father attends evening classes (likely)	.04
3/31	Present age of mother (older)	.03
3/37	Mother's present employment (part-time)	.02
3/38	Mother's intention when child started school (full time employment)	.009
3/43	Use of official body (most likely to go to health visitor & Citizens' Advice Bureau	.01
3/61	Whether wife goes out separately (unlikely)	.008

As was shown in Table X: 7, a key feature of mothers in Sub-group IIIa was that they were the oldest of all mothers in the sample. Both parents in this sub-group were likely to have stayed at school longer, to have been older when they married and older when their first child was born. They were characterised by fairly comfortable living standards and the sub-group included all the 'owner-occupiers' in the sample.

It is arguable that their own extended education (in comparison to the rest of the sample) influenced their attitude to pre-schooling. They appeared ambitious for their children and to think that a few mornings a week at a playgroup would help prepare them for separation from home when 'big school' started. Benefits were primarily seen as social: 'I'm not sending her/to a playgroup so that she can walk out a genius, just so that she can develop the most natural way'. With one exception, mothers wanted to be involved in the playgroup and were alive to the special skills or lack of them in playleaders.

'When she first went there, it was really worth it: she used to stand back and watch, but after the first few weeks, she was really a leader there. The woman that was running it then really knew what she was doing - everybody fitted in. Nobody was forced to do anything, but she managed to get us all doing what she wanted.....I think it taught me quite a lot. One thing was to write these small letters again. When I first went there, I was putting the names at the top of the papers and she (playleader) came up to me and said, 'Not capitals!' Ther I really had to think how to do the small letters again. I got ideas how to let Fiona do things.....things like singing number songs - I think that's marvellous. We all used to talk about what things they would do when they went to school, so I feel I'm half way to getting Fiona ready for school.'

A few mothers were more aware of reading and numbers: 'Some people think that learning is just how to put one brick on top of another, but when my child puts one brick on top of another, I want her to say, 'There's two'.'

Although mothers did not themselves see the value of attendance at playgroup as of primary importance for them, yet remarks such as these reveal that they had learned something about enjoyable and beneficial pre-school activities which had enabled them to extend the play

experience of their children at home. These were the mothers who were significantly more likely to use finger paints and large brushes, and tolerate and understand 'messy play' - all ideas and equipment introduced at a good playgroup (see Table X:15,16,17: Appendix VI).

To get what they wanted for their children, these mothers were able and prepared to pay; they were also prepared and able to make a considerable effort to go out of the immediate area for such provision. This meant a lengthy walk or even a cycle ride. Some mothers felt that provision outside the district was an advantage. Thye disliked the estate and did not wish to mix with their neighbours; some went so far as to say that they would never send their children to a playgroup on the estate because of 'roughness' or because they thought there was an advantage in a 'change of scene'. Indeed, although ten mothers made use of playgroups outside the area, only two of these eventually changed to local provision. This, of course, could also have been because they did not wish to move a child who was happily settled and who would probably be starting school shortly.

But although they were inclined 'to keep themselves to themselves', mothers in sub-group IIIa were not social isolates. They had friends locally whom they visited and they 'got out and about as a family' at weekends. With the exception of one mother who said frankly that she was 'not keen on young children' and just had to go out to work 'to keep sane' (although she behaved very naturally and warmly with her child during interview), mothers were home-orientated. Those who did work, found part-time employment until their child reached school age. It was noticeable, however, that they had broader interests than mothers in the rest of the sample - reading (use of library), gardening and practical handicrafts figured uniquely in their account of how they spent their evenings, rather than 'just television'.

Table X: 15

Variables associated with mothers in sub-group IIIb

Variable Number	Variable Name	Significance Level
1/6	One parent family (likely)	.02
2/42	Type of administration preferred (council)	.03
2/49	Provision required during school holidays (likely)	.06 (not sig.)
2/80	Playgroup 'very important' in enabling child to gain a lasting educational advantage	.002
3/35	Marriage history of mother (separated or divorced)	.05
3/43	Use of official body (clinic)	.01

Sub-group IIIb included a large proportion of one-parent families and as such was a special case; their difficulties have already been described. But the feelings of mothers living on social security were perhaps summed up by one who, towards the end of the interview said: 'Let's face it, with the playgroup down there, I'll want to keep my business to myself. I think I'm always wary of who I'm talking to. It's the authorities and I know I've got to depend on them for money to keep the children. I'm always worried about when the social security people are going to call.....they make you feel so guilty and then you've got to prove yourself innocent. They ask you if you've got any savings and if you have, they'll stop your money, so you can't try and get anything behind you. If anyone gives you a present, you're frightened in case they see it.....'

But it is not only 'mothers alone' who may be under considerable strain. Mothers who have the 'support' of their husbands may, through lack of education, temperament, youth or ill-health, feel themselves inadequate to cope, even though their families are, as in this sub-group, smaller than average. Marital support may, of course, be only nominal - fathers may themselves be invalids, they may be gamblers, wastrels or even wife-beaters. Backgrounds such as these are not ones to which a woman wants to admit; the result appears to be a withdrawal from society and friends, an alienation from those in authority.

Given the anecdotal nature of the tapescripts and personal notes, they nevertheless document and reinforce the findings in the analysis; the question that remains, however, is what sort of a picture do all these variables make when considered in relation to use or non-use of pre-school provision? It is this which will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

Conclusions and discussion

When this study was first begun, its main objective was to investigate the response of mothers to new pre-school provision for their children, and to describe some characteristics of mothers who chose not to use it. Though it is well established that in general, families in Social Classes IV and V tend to make less use of all services, "what is urgently needed" as once recent study said, (Davie, Butler and Goldstein, 1972, p.70) "is more information about why certain families do not make use of services".

This aim was facilitated by Hillingdon Borough Council, which allowed monitoring of its programme to site playgroups run by Tenants' Associations on some of its housing estates. One such estate, 'Hillcroft', housing a reasonably homogeneous community of working-class families, became the focus of this study.

The community was a stable one, whose individual families were relatively well-housed and well-to-do. There were few immigrants in the area and none in the sample. There were no tower blocks in the vicinity and the highest building in the estate was three storeys tall. 'Hillcroft', in other words, was a comfortable, quite pleasant 'blue-collar' estate unlike housing areas of inner cities or deprived localities in which the more obvious problems associated with non take-up of external facilities and services have been described in recent studies (Joseph and Parfit 1972, Douglas 1968; Davie, Butler and Goldstein, 1972; Holman et al. 1970). Moreover Hillcroft's active Tenants' Association (see Chapter VI, p.8), with its news letters and social activities, implied at least some settled community life and the active involvement of many living there. The function of this association was not limited to bringing neighbours together; it was also concerned with the welfare of individuals and groups on the estate. It helped members obtain their rights with regard to housing and pressurised the local authority to improve amenities. Notably, since there was no pre-school provision near 'Hillcroft' - playgroups, nursery school and day centres

all had long waiting lists and required considerable time and effort to reach - the Tenants'Association had actually approached the Housing Department before the study began for a flat to be set aside for use as a playgroup. All this suggested that there was an active core of concern for the under-fives in this community and it is against this background that the major findings of the study should be judged.

1. Almost one-third of families in the sample did not take up pre-school provision which was available "on their doorstep and for which a place was guaranteed for their child"

The key question in this study was whether there would be any families in the sample who had no wish to make use of pre-school provision. Prior to its becoming available, nearly a third of the sample stated categorically that they had no particular interest in pre-school education for their child. When this was put to the test, by providing a facility in the form of a playgroup on the estate itself, the proportion of mothers who changed their minds was insignificant. (See Appendix V). Seventy seven families were eligible for the provision, but 22 of these, or 29 per cent, chose not to make use of it, despite the fact that it was within walking distance of their homes and despite having been told personally about it.

It is important to stress at this stage that, although reasons for non-take-up varied, families who chose not to make use of the playgroup, did so not because of the nature of the provision; their responses were made to pre-school provision in general. Hence, the argument that their views were biassed against a particular form of provision, i.e. a playgroup, or against a particular type of organisation, or teacher, or playgroup leader does not hold; whilst such matters have affected their behavioural response, they did not apply to their answers to the questionnaire. Because these answers, reflecting their general attitudes to pre-school provision, correlated so highly with their behaviour

once the provision was on site, it is reasonable to argue that their behavioural response, too, sprang from a basic disinclination to use pre-school provision, rather than from any local considerations.

In view of local demand for provision voiced by the Tenants' Association, and assurance of support for it, to find nearly one-third of the sample was dis-inclined to make use of it, was suprising; it was reminiscent of the proportion of non-takers in the Lambeth study (ILPPA, 1972), where nearly one-third of mothers living in a highly deprived area also did not use a playgroup, even though they had previously expressed their intention of doing so. In that particular study however, socio-economic variables, such as housing, low incomes, large families and high rise flats, coupled with the cost, could be put forward as obvious reasons for non-attendance. In this study, these variables were to some extent controlled, or were irrevelant, and so explanations for the observed non take-up demand other hypotheses.

It is worth noting that the relatively high proportion of families who rejected formal pre-school provision for their children suggests that, although there may be general approval of the availability of such provision, amounting to almost universal demand, such demand may not actually result in almost universal take-up if the provision existed. In other words, the evidence of the Lambeth study, the National Children's Bureau Study (1972) and this study implies that the assumption inherent in the 1967 Plowden estimates and supported by evidence supplied by a number of pressure groups for more nursery provision disguise a complex variety of reactions and attitudes to formal pre-school provision, including playgroups.

2. <u>One outcome of the study was to draw attention to two small sub-groups of families: those who made initial use of the facility, but subsequently dropped away, and those who manifestly used pre-school provision, but only at the suggestion of social workers or other outside agencies.</u>

Several weeks after the inauguration of the playgroup, a check was made to see who was still attending. It was found that eight mothers either used it on an irregular basis or had dropped away altogether. What this meant was that after the settling-in period, 39 per cent of families were not using any form of pre-school provision. (i.e. non-users together with those who had dropped away). Mothers in the former group tended to be younger than average for the sample, and to have larger unplanned families which they had started earlier than most. They were inclined to be less friendly towards their neighbours and somewhat chary of Council-sponsored provision.

It might reasonably be assumed that mothers who dropped away had little in common with the non-users, and that reasons for their discontinuance lay in some aspect of the facility itself. Indeed, explanations put forward to the supervisor would support this assumption; they ranged from moving house or starting school, to allegations of their child being attacked by other children. It was found, however that these children had not started school, that the families had not moved and the nature of the discord was not such as would normally bring about the removal of a child. The study suggests a different explanation for the observed behaviour and that this group of mothers (termed 'reluctant' users in the study) share important characteristics with a proportion of both non-users and those already using some form of pre-schooling.

It was also found that approximately half the mothers already using pre-school provision outside the area, were doing so following the intervention by some agency and not on their own initiative; these were therefore called 'interventionist'users. They comprised 12 per cent of the sample and used provision primarily because they were special cases, often one-parent families or mothers in 'crisis' situations.

This finding questions any assumption that all families using provision do so positively or actually want their children to be there. The study was able to quantify the proportion of 'reluctant' and 'interventionist' users within the sample, and as will be

discussed later, emphasises the relevance of such groups to non take-up of provision.

3. <u>The study isolated a number of variables associated with positive and negative attitudes to provision, regardless of whether or not use was made of facilities. This focused attention away from use or non-use of the playgroup as the central issue, to the relevance of more fundamental differences between families</u>.

A point highlighted in the study was that among those who chose not to use provision, there were both 'positive' and 'negative' rejections. That is to say that some mothers, (positive rejectors approximately half the group), felt no need to send their children to a pre-school group, believing that they themselves could provide best for their child in their own home. 'Negative' rejectors tended to spurn pre-school provision because such activities were given low priority or because they were indifferent to it. Analysis of the 'Hillcroft' sample showed that high regard for the importance of various aspects of playgroup practice was an important factor associated with use of provision. (See Appendix II). Similarly, among those who actually used the playgroup, the major proportion could be said to have had a positive approach - they came to 'open evenings' and made themselves known to the supervisor; they showed interest and concern in what their children were doing at the playgroup. But a minority made only half-hearted contact, coming intermittently or dropping away altogether. Even amongst those who already used provision, it was possible to distinguish a similar division between those who had made a special effort to seek out the type of facility they wanted for their children and those who found their way there only with the help of an intermediary.

What the analysis showed was that the three negatively oriented groups, (collectively called B mothers in the study) had a number of features in common. They tended to have married and started their families young and to have had more problems with their marriage: the roles of husband and wife were more sharply defined, with the supportive home-making burden falling on the wife. These mothers tended to be in poorer health, and to have less contact with members of their extended family and friends, as well as less time and inclination to play with their children. In contrast to the more positive mothers (collectively called A group) who in spite of the normal ups and downs of family life, got on well with their neighbours, who shared many of the household responsibilities with their husbands and who seemed to enjoy their children's company, those in the B group seldom appeared to be really in command of their domestic situation. Each B family seemed to have its own individual assortment of problems; all apparently intensified by the youth of the parents, especially the mother, and by feelings of loneliness and depression.

In general what this study seemed to show was that the degree of awareness and enthusiasm which mothers showed for pre-schooling was a reflection of the mother's own psychological situation. For one group of mothers (A) those who were well adjusted, whose lives seemed 'in control' and positive (57 per cent of the sample) there was also a positive attitude to the welfare of their children. This attitude could involve a number of different strategies. Either a mother could choose to keep her children at home, and devote herself to their interests; or she could go out of her way to find some form of pre-schooling, perhaps several miles away from her own home; or thirdly, she could with enthusiasm or diffidence support the new playgroup provision. No judgement was made as to which strategy was best for the child; it may well be the case that, depending on circumstances, any one of these three strategies would prove beneficial.

Nor did those mothers who formed the second group(B) with less stable personal lives, suffering from feelings of isolation, depression, acute nervousness, or perhaps fear (of her husband, of social inadequacy, of neighbours or more generally, of society) form a homogeneous group in relation to pre-schooling. Some let their children take up external provision, possibly without wholehearted enthusiasm. Others simply stayed away or took only a passing interest. Here again, there was a variety of behaviour underpinned by negative attitudes - aggressiveness, alienation from neighbours and lack of confidence - which militated against the development of both mother and child.

Some of these B mothers gave the impression that while they cared just as much for their children in general as any other group, personal problems provided little scope for other than marginal concern for planned provision for their children. These impressions suggest that pre-school provision, like all other external services, are used by those who are already in a position to take advantage of them, and are avoided by those who, though they may need them most, are unable to consider them.

This group of(B) mothers comprised 43 per cent of the sample and finds a striking parallel in the 41 per cent of women with young children affected by 'depression, loneliness and dissatisfaction' described in another recent study. (Richman, N. 1974). This investigation focussed on three types of local authority housing: high rise flats (tower blocks), low rise flats (not more than 4 floors) and houses. Each of the 75 families in the sample had a 3 year old child and at least one younger child. While no significant differences emerged between families in the three types of housing in the number of children with behavioural problems or the number of mothers who were psychiatrically disturbed, in both the groups living in flats, as opposed to houses, there were more mothers complaining of loneliness and depression as well as dissatisfaction with lack of playing space for their children. Many investigations have drawn attention to problems associated with mothers and young children living in high rise flats, but the Richman study indicates that for such mothers,

living in even three or four storey blocks like 'Hillcroft' can generate feelings of isolation and depression, intensified by dissatisfaction with play facilities.

The similarity in the proportion of mothers affected in both the Richman study and in 'Hillcroft', could of course be mere co-incidence; since different measures were used in each study; the definition of 'depression' would need qualification. The floor on which a mother lived in 'Hillcroft' was not associated one way or the other with take-up of provision, but depression and loneliness characterised the mothers who, in this particular study, are seen as in the greatest need of support.

It can be argued that isolation within the community does not necessarily indicate stress. It has been suggested (Dennis, N. 1963), that among the comparatively affluent class of manual workers, there is a diminished need for neighbours. Where people are ambitious, they may remain socially aloof. Such mothers existed in 'Hillcroft', but they were not associated with non-use of provision. They found time and energy to seek friends and facilities outside the immediate environment. It was rather those mothers cut off from family and friends who appeared to fall into the negative categories of 'reluctant' and 'interventionist' users.

4. <u>Mothers with these 'positive' and 'negative' attitudes to pre-school provision seemed to be identifiable by one small group of variables, possibly related to stress. If this is the case, then these variables might be considered as the basis of a predictive instrument.</u>

This group of 'predictive' variables, referred to in the text as the 'Alienation Factor', evolved from an intensive study of those mothers who already used provision.

Mothers were given a 'score' on the following variables:-

1. Age mother married. 2. Attitude to 'messy' play. 3. Attitude to neighbours. 4.Contact with family and friends. 5. The time available for relaxed play with her child. 6. The degree of child centredness, and 7. The nature of her relationship with her child.

It was found that those mothers whose total scores were highest (i.e. least 'positive') fell in the 'interventionist' group and that those with the lowest scores had found provision on their own initiative. Low and high scores similarly distinguished between mothers who became regular attenders at the playgroup and those who dropped away, and between the 'positive' and 'negative' rejectors of pre-schooling.

Taken together, most of these variables seemed to reflect a degree of tension generated in the mother. She was likely to be too 'busy' to play with her child and would either be very intolerant of potentially 'messy' play or completely indifferent as to how much water or paint was splashed around. Similarly, she either put the child before all else and tended to be nervously over-restrictive or seemed so pre-occupied by her personal worries that she was unable to focus steady attention on her child's day-to-day needs. For one reason or another, what might have been a normal mother-child relationship was overlaid and distorted by stress. Whereas other mothers in the sample had problems also, but had the support of family and friends, these mothers appeared alienated and unable to draw on such support.

Although 'alienated' perhaps best described the observed state of such mothers and 'stress' appeared a sympton of their condition, a key to the heart of the matter may lie in their youth when they married. Youth in itself is not a cause, but where a girl has felt unhappy at school or at work and has sought identity and release through early marriage and having children, the stress which generated the need for such a 'way out' is not necessarily reduced. Their homes and families become in turn sources of crisis and simply aggravate the original problem. The immaturity and lack of preparation for marriage and motherhood of these girls could be an important

contributory factor, therefore, in explaining their dis-enchantment and difficulties. If this is indeed the case, (and this study is not alone in drawing attention to the vulnerability of such young women - McKinlay, J.B. and M Kinlay, S.M. 1972), then it has important implications for any interventionist measures.

5. Although no causal relationship was established, the study suggested that the presence of stress and alienation went hand in hand with marked lowering of the quality of the mother-child relationship.

Whatever the origins of their malaise, those mothers were less likely to be providing a desirable environment for their children; As a group, they were subject to minor ailments; they had little time or inclination for relaxed play with their children. Except for those who had observed play at day care centres or playgroups and whose repertoire of play activities in the home seem to have been extended thereby, they seemed unaware of the importance of play and opportunities for using inexpensive materials available in every home. Children were more likely to be left to their own devices or severely restricted, in contrast to the majority of children whose mothers kept a watchful eye on their play or took them to the park or on regular outings. Although no specific questions were asked about diet, it was evident that meals were often irregular, insubstantial or unbalanced.

Attitudes of some mothers in this sub-group were particularly suggestive of a culture of poverty (Lewis, O. 1965; Haggstrom, W. 1964) - foreshortened horizons, distrust of authority, alienation and pre-occupation with the present.

But mothers in this category formed only a small proportion of all B mothers; there was no indication that (according to results on the Rotter I - E scale, see Appendix III) as a group these mothers felt themselves 'victims of fate or chance'. What they appeared to lack, however, was a mature and happy relationship with their children.

A contributory factor to the situation observed in some families which did not take up provision may impinge on the break-up of the extended family, together with the continuance of traditional attitudes. Avoidance of intrusion and preservation of privacy (Bott, E. 1957), and social cohesion (McMahon, D. 1962) are well known working class characteristics, certainly in the South. Yet we know that in many new towns and estates - 'Hillcroft' was only five years old at the time of the survey - the extended family had been broken up; in particular, the dominating relationship of mother to married daughter (Willmott, P and Young, M. 1960), must have been affected by this break-up. While the majority of 'daughters' in the sample were local and had retained close identification with their 'mothers', it was markedly apparent that 'B' daughters were likely to have been deprived by circumstance of the support of their mothers and extended family. Yet they perhaps retained their characteristic working class pride and independence which prevented them 'Putting themselves forward' (Mogey, J. 1956.), and therefore, from seeking social service support or help from unfamiliar neighbours or even the playgroup. It is arguable that where the personal family support system had broken down and there was no help for shopping or babysitting and more importantly, no one to confide in, where conjugal roles were sharply differentiated, where husband and wife failed to give each other emotional and practical support, then the burden on the wife often became overwhelming; as a result, attitudes were more likely to be negative and unresponsive.

6. <u>When considering the sample as a whole, lack of enthusiasm for pre-schooling might be explained in the following terms: single parenting, mother's youth, attitudes to education and perception of own role.</u>

Although mothers on-their-own comprised only 9 per cent of the sample, they stood out clearly in the analysis as an important sub-group. While not incapable or intrinsically unable to provide a stable coping family, one-parent families nevertheless have to contend with external conditions which are dis-enablers and constitute a very real handicap. They often have to choose between two less than ideal solutions; either they stay at home with their children and thereby experience financial hardship, or they go out to work. If the latter, they may have enough to live on, but they are obliged to play three different roles - breadwinner, housewife and mother. Either way, they have little time or opportunity for social niceties or relaxation. If they use pre-school provision (day care), they may feel ousted from their child's affection by those who care for him while she is working. Conversely, if mothers do not use facilities and stay at home, they may be under constant stress and worry as to how to manage. Implementation of recommendations in the Finer Report (1974) might do much to ease this stressful situation.

Another important indicator, independent of single parenting was a mother's age when she married. Where she married in her teens and started a family straight away, often having two or three children in quick succession, it seems she was less likely both to enjoy a positive relationship with them and to want to use pre-school provision.

It is a striking fact that this should obtain even in cases where there was no obvious financial hardship or housing difficulty. This is not to say that all larger families have poor mother-child relationships, or do not use pre-schooling and that all young mothers have unhappy marriages; the study suggests, although it does not establish a direct link, that young mothers, coping unaided with

several under-fives and a disappointing marriage, do not have the personal resources equal to the situation or to become involved with outside commitments, like playgroups. For a mother who lacks confidence, these can be seen as a threat however welcoming the organisers may be - and this diffidence seems more common than might be anticipated.

Looked at another way, there are three main ways in which a child can come second best; where a mother is suffering from chronic depression; if the financial problems become too great a burden and, if the mother herself sees little or no importance in what may be loosely termed 'educational activities'. This is clearly exemplified in the two contrasting 'types' of mothers who did not use provision. One group took their children out shopping, on various local outings and spent time playing with them; the others were more inclined to let their children play unsupervised while they went out, and found little time for relaxed play.

7. It is also clear that single explanations (such as being a one-parent family or being relatively poor) are not sufficient to explain why some mothers turn down external resources.

The issue is not one of simple reasons leading to simple solutions. There was little evidence, for example, to suggest that in 'Hillcroft' at least, expense was a major inhibiting factor. Although some mothers had difficulty in making ends meet and appreciated Council help which kept fees within their means (15p), clearly mothers were willing and able to pay; indeed, the least well off were among those who used the playgroup or other provision; financial stringency was not a characteristic of those who did not do so.

Convenient location would seem to have been the enabling factor initially for 37 mothers (48 per cent), but considerations other than distance were also operating among those who dropped away and among mothers already using provision outside the area (23 per cent).

Two of these mothers out of a total of 18 moved their children to the new local playgroup. Most decided not to change to the local group because their child was happily settled elsewhere - alternatively they preferred provision outside the immediate environment.

But there was another group of mothers for whom no real choice was involved (9 per cent). These were working mothers, many of whom were one-parent families, for whom day care was available. Manifestly a playgroup which opened at restricted times and encouraged involvement, was not seen by them as a solution; it offered no practical alternative to their existing arrangements.

One possible reason for non take-up of provision by non-working mothers could have been that the type of provision failed to meet their needs. Did they also wish to go out to work and therefore require quite different forms of care? The answer, in general terms was 'no'. Contrary to the currently popular picture of mothers who want or need to go out to work, the majority of mothers in "Hillcroft" professed themselves content to stay at home while their children were under school age; many of them probably found greater satisfaction and fulfilment in the home than they had either at school or work. There was no indication, therefore, among mothers who did not use the playgroup of a strong desire for either nursery schooling or day care. Unlike the middle class mothers described by Hannah Gavron (Gavron 1966), these young women did not appear to feel imprisoned by drudgery, although some shared feelings of isolation.

Undoubtedly, local circumstances have a strong influence on community attitudes and priorities. The 'Hillcroft' mothers' reaction to pre-schooling and work is by no means the only possible one. It does not tally, for example, with experience at the Coram Children's Centre in London. In that particular district, quite different conditions prevail. There are many hotels which offer plenty of

employment and there are both social and economic pressures for mothers to work. Economic and social conditions, quite independent of social class, generate different responses to pre-schooling. Moreover, these may vary, not only from one district to another, but also in the same district from one time to another. Many mothers in 'Hillcroft', for example, set great store in providing lavish toys at Christmas and birthdays; as inflation erodes their material standards, inability to do this may persuade them to consider at least part-time employment.

Given these points, there are some grounds for believing, as other research has suggested (Barnes J.H. et al. 1974) that disadvantage may be a relative term rather than an absolute; and that a number of 'latent variables' may cluster together in a variety of combinations to make 'disadvantage' more likely, so that it cannot be simply contained within particular geographical areas or remain constant over long periods of time.

8. <u>The study suggests that where material conditions do not obviously affect the take-up of provision, (lack of money, distance, high rise flats etc.) explanations should be sought not so much in terms of socio-economic factors as with the existence or absence of complex personal resources.</u>

In <u>From Birth to Seven</u>* the authors, in commenting on the findings that families in Social Class V and to, a lesser extent in Social Class IV made less use of many of the medical services for children than did other families, speculated: "It may be that welfare clinics and other services are badly sited.... clearly local authorities should consider the availability of public transport and no least, its cost.... It is also possible that some mothers find the "atmosphere" in clinics rather daunting...."

The implication of such speculations is that socio-economic variables, such as distance, or cost, or siting, or aspects of the provision itself, such as the "atmosphere", lie at the root of non take-up.

* (Davie, R., Butler, N., Goldstein, H., 1972)

In this study, some of these aspects were removed, by, for example siting the playgroup within the estate, by having it administered by the Tenants' Association, by ensuring a place for every child on the estate. But the response to the questionnaire suggested that these aspects were not in this sample, of major importance, and that the reasons for non take-up lay not with such considerations, but with a mother's view of herself and her situation and her consequent attitudes.

Indeed, social class, although recognised as an important variable, has been shown in other studies to afford insufficient explanation for observed differences. In a study of children approaching school age (Chazan M. Laing, A. Jackson, S. 1972) in which a comparison was made between those who were well prepared and those who were badly prepared for school, it was found that by no means all the less well-prepared children came from homes where there were unsatisfactory material conditions.

Another study of the relationship between educational opportunity and the home, (Miller, G.W. 1971), also found that social class "didn't explain anything on its own...." and that "if regarded as all important, it can mask factors which are demonstrated to be of greater real importance in understanding differences".

Differences which emerged in the present investigation and imply a more fruitful field for further study were more psychologically orientated. As has already been pointed out findings suggested that mother in the 'B groups' tended to have either a particular type of marriage relationship or more marriage problems than 'A group' mothers. This came out clearly in the tapescripts; it was reflected in the number of separated or divorced mothers, the lack of shared responsibility in the home, the extremely narrow range of interests and activities, the restricted life-style both inside and outside the home.

Yet the quality of the marital tie or the interpersonal relationship with husband or boyfriend has been found to be of crucial importance for mental health. (Brown, G.W., Bhrolcain and Harris T, 1975). Their investigation concerned two samples of women aged between 18 and 65 living in one former London borough. One was a group of 114 patients, undergoing either in or out patient treatment, for primary depression which had begun during the twelve momths prior to interview. The second group was a random sample of two hundred and twenty women; each of these was screened for possible psychiatric disturbance, and specifically for depressive conditions - sleeplessness, feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness, lack of energy and so on.

In addition to finding a link between life-events and depression. and a relationship between social class and psychiatric disturbance, already well established in the literature, the investigators went on to examine background factors which could account for the greater likelihood of breakdown amongst women with young children at home. This was shown to be due, not simply to the fact of more crises occurring in the lives of working class women, but to their greater vulnerability to disturbance when they experienced environmental stresses.

This vulnerability stemmed from four main factors and it is these which have particular relevance to the present study:- the 'dramatic change' in the quality of their marriage which takes place as soon as they start having children; loss of mother by death or separation i.e. loss of contact with 'extended' families leading to isolation; having three or more children under fourteen at home and finally lack of full or part-time employment.

As we have seen, full or part-time work was considered undesirable by the majority of the sample, until children reached school age. There was also a concentration of families with three or more children

at home in the sub-group of non-users 'under strain'. As to loss of mother by death or separation, it was found that there was a higher 'grandma' mortality rate among non-users - 18 per cent, as compared with two per cent among new users and six per cent among those who already used pre-school provision. This is all the more remarkable since respondents whose own mothers had died were younger than average for the sample. These respondents were also less confident in their own ability to become involved in the playgroup or follow a course; they found it difficult to commit themselves to any future arrangement.

It seems, therefore, that the sub-group of 43 per cent of mothers which could be diagnosed as showing signs of lack of confidence and undue stress and strain in "Hillcroft" were particularly characterised by the vulnerability factors to depression cited by Brown et al. Clearly, as in the present study, numbers were small and conclusions were tentative. The investigators point out the complexity of the inter-relationships of the four vulnerability factors they have isolated. Consequently, no firm conclusions can be reached, but such speculations nevertheless make better sense of the findings in the present study than do explanations in terms of class or other commonly-held assumptions.

IMPLICATIONS

No claims for generality can be made for this study. Indeed, it is one of the features of a study of this kind that it produces results unique to one particular area. Other results will offer a different mix of attitudes and responses - as has already been pointed out in relation to mothers' desire to work.

In other districts there may well be not only a greater proportion of working mothers, but also more one-parent families. Cultural traditions and backgrounds may be fundamentally disparate and social pressures vary. But this simply underlines that, in pre-school

provision, as well as in so much other social provision, local characteristics and needs should define local solutions. (Halsey Educational Priority 1972, P. 187) refers to "locality focus" as essential.

It is also worth noting that had the study used sample survey methods or failed to reach every eligible mother in the area, results would have been very different. Those mothers who, initially, slammed the door in our faces or refused to talk, all fell in the sub-group of mothers under greater than average strain. Had they been excluded, the sample would have been biassed in favour of the more friendly, outgoing mothers. Most of these came forward to use the provision: those who did not were well integrated in the community and quite happy and confident in keeping their children at home.

It was the nameless faces who avoided or resented normal social contact who comprised a substantial part of those who were under stress and found difficulty in coping, but who were not necessarily known to social workers and health visitors. As another study (Joseph and Parfit, op.cit.) commented:
"We may think it unfortunate when many parents, expecially those whose children we feel are in the greatest need of play experience, do not recognise this need themselves. This is an important consideration in planning. To try and bridge this gap, a better understanding of parental attitudes will be necessary. It will also be essential to think afresh about such things as parental education and counselling, ease of accessibility and the relationship to educational services". Now this study offers no encouragement to the view that "parental education" and "counselling" will induce such parents to make use of pre-school provision, where those attitudes spring from deep psychological pressures and needs within the family itself. Nor does it suggest that such an approach would be desirable, leading at best to reluctant usage; such an approach does not deal with the origins of the problem, but only with its manifestations.

Non take-up of provision on the scale revealed in this particular study poses a more fundamental problem for pre-school services as a whole, because it questions where the best interests of the child really lie. Is it better that a family should be coerced into sending their children to some form of external provision, so that they may benefit from that experience - an assumption that has recently been seriously questioned (Tizard B. 1975) - or should such services be altered so as to recognise the fact that many families will not use them as currently offered? And if the latter, how should such services be made available?

While the study offers no solutions to this dilemma, there are certain implications for future policy:-

1. Findings beg questions of any national or regional policy based on the concept of 'universal demand' for pre-school provision. They suggest that where non take-up is experienced, little improvement will be achieved by mere extension of existing facilities

A point to stress here is that there was little justification for suggesting that 'demand' would mean 'middle-class demand' (Denby, M.1973). This playgroup, in the centre of a working class community, was full to capacity of working class children. On the face of it, this was a highly successful venture on the part of a local authority. Response to the facility completely justified the outlay. What was not apparent to the superficial observer was that acceptence of children from a neighbouring council estate, but outside the catchment area, masked the fact that local mothers eligible for a place did not take it up. Here, as in a recent survey of London's One O'Clock Clubs (Zienau 1974) it was also the younger mothers with larger families who did not use the provision. In that study, under-representation of unskilled workers wives was quoted in support of the argument that all pre-school facilities are class biassed, because of the concept that pre-schooling is predominently middle class. Such an interpretation is not tenable in this study, however.

A minority of mothers in this working class sample obviously did not want any facility and thought their children would be better off at home. (14 per cent.) Another small group were 'crisis' cases, families whose children had been found pre-school places and who were receiving help and support from Social Services. These comprised 12 per cent of the sample and would correspond to the Plowden (1967) estimate of 12 - 15 per cent of welfare cases in a (school) population.

But there were other mothers (31 per cent) who shared many 'negative' characteristics with those who were supported by Social Services. Although they too had problems which manifestly militated against a happy and secure family environment and had little support from their own families, they had no contact with social workers or health visitors. These mothers were unlikely to seek or sustain the use of existing pre-school facilities, even though they were not opposed to them and both they and their children would probably benefit from them.

Obviously, present social services resources could not meet the needs of this group and many mothers would construe help from 'them' as unwarranted interference. (I.E.A. 1968.) Yet the gradual acceptance of the interviewers as non-authoritative, relaxed listeners with confidentiality assured, suggested that informal support by trained volunteers not only might ensure that any families who need professional help had access to it, but that many more families did not reach the state where such help was needed.

There were also those mothers who felt under considerable strain, but whose natural reaction was to turn inwards to the family; such mothers draw strength from having their children about them, even though at the same time, their energies are depleted and they find difficulty in coping. Home visiting by sensitive, informed but non-official people with time to give and a flexible approach, might help some of these mothers to make decisions and sustain effort which they are not at present able to achieve.

It may be that a similar approach underlay the figures given by the educational social worker attached to the London Educational Priority Project (Lyons, 1973, p.21). She estimated that 20 - 25 per cent of families might be referred for social work support; but it was clear from her arguement that these figures derived from her perception of her role as preventative.

It was noteworthy that no-one in 'Hillcroft' admitted to having their children minded or minding children. Nevertheless, as confidence in the interviewers increased, it became clear that children were being minded on an informal basis and that such an arrangement was found satisfactory. There are many advantages inherent in child minding for parents and minders as well as children. Active recruitment of good minders could do much to help some mothers who do not feel that day care, nursery school or playgroup is right for them.

2. There is a need for increased flexibility in deploying resources and for an awareness of the wider implications of administrative decisions.

It is a truism to say that each community is different; and yet, even at a local level, there seems to be a tendency to assume that what is good for one district is good for the next. A number of minor findings have practical implications in this direction.

1. Variations in the number of children of any one age point the need for adaptability in the design of premises and use of resources. The immediate need may be for a playgroup, however it may be subsequently for youth clubs or Drop-inCentres, but space and money might preclude new building. The premises in 'Hillcroft' were not considered by the Council suitable for use as a youth club, however.

2. 'Hillcroft' had a fairly stable population and an active Tenants' Association was established. This was a necessary qualification for Council provision of playgroup premises. But there are other estates

in the borough where the need for provision was as great or even greater, but where there is no Tenants' Association. Consequently, such estates under existing administrative guidelines, were not eligible for Council subsidised facilities.

3. The enviable Council policy of re-housing families with two children of different sex once the younger was one year old, led in some cases to marked preoccupation with the sex of an expected child and even taking a chance on having another child, 'just to get a house'. In Lambeth (ILPPA, 1972), where it appeared that many problem families had been re-housed in the same area, the general level of social competence was lower than might be expected with consequent difficulty in finding a nucleus of mothers to start a playgroup. In both cases, local housing policies had repercussions not readily perceived.

4. The present concept of pre-school provision seems to be to provide a service, external, and as an alternative, to the home. There is, however, little provision for mothers who wish to retain their 'autonomy' but who lack resources. Extension of toy library facilities, an outward reach from existing nursery schools and playgroups could help here, but if experience in 'Hillcroft' is replicated elsewhere, mothers who most need these resources will not come forward without new ways of approaching them.

5. To reach mothers who are the chief concern of this study, written communications, personal and otherwise, were not found effective. Face-to-face contact was needed with time both to listen and explain. This suggests that community workers based on particular estates can play a vital part in communication.

3. <u>What this study points to (though it does not prove) is that the issue of take-up of pre-school provision really depends on the nature of the mother-child relationship. If this is really the heart of the matter, then one of its important implications is that a primary aim of pre-school provision might be to support and mature this relationship to a point where all mothers are able to take a more positive approach to the welfare and education of their children</u>.

There are a growing number of indicators (Levinstein, P., and Sunley, R., 1967; Gordon, I., 1974) that the mother is the key figure in the pre-school education programme of children, and that even disadvantaged mothers, when involved in such a programme, have a major contribution to make. As Elizabeth Newson has pointed out: "Parents are uniquely knowledgeable - if given techniques and know-how". Other investigators have commented that "Disadvantaged children may be most amenable to change in classes conducted by teachers who are flexible, naively optimistic, enthusiastically committed and unburdened by traditional occupations and beliefs". (Shore, M.F., Milgram, N.A., Malasky, C., 1971).

An interesting experiment in the use of mothers as agents of change is the Home Instruction Program for Pre-school Youngsters (HIPPY) in Israel. It was recognised that a source of impaired development was lack of early stimulation and that the most stable factor in a young child's life was its mother. The Program therefore set out to teach disadvantaged mothers a variety of enriching activities and to help them introduce these activities into their personal relationships with their pre-school children. Community aides, themselves para-professionals, visited the homes once a week and showed mothers how to teach their own children the daily 20 minute lessons. The effectiveness of this programme is still under examination, but experience of the first four years has been highly encouraging. (Lombard, A., 1974).

There are a number of other models in this country which aim at involving parents - the Red House scheme in Yorkshire which combined a centre and home visiting scheme with a highly structured approach; a project at the Froebel Institute which brings parents to a nursery centre and puts them at the centre of their child's cognitive development; the Norwich Feasibility

study which uses trained teachers and concentrates in helping parents become involved in their children's language development, are only a few of the projects currently under way, exploring ways of how to increase parent participation.

The most encouraging results in pre-school intervention suggest, therefore, that involvement of mothers/parents is a major factor in success. (Rose, N., 1974). The Pre-school Playgroups Association now considers that what was once criticised as a weakness, namely its dependence on non-professional mothers and fathers is, in fact, its greatest strength; the Association is now exploring ways of pin-pointing the contributory factors to success in achieving parent participation.

But people who use playgroups tend to be self-selected; the studies referred to above mainly used small, carefully selected samples of people who volunteered to take part, or, as in Israel, were highly motivated. The real difficulty is to reach those mothers who cut themselves off from the community and are struggling with more fundamental issues of their own existence which prevent them achieving a satisfactory relationship with their children.

There are examples of playgroups which succeed in helping such mothers to a real understanding and a desire to take increased responsibility for their child's development; there are nursery schools which reach a much wider than average range of mothers and draw them into the life of the community. Successful programmes, using para-professionals have also been followed in America with samples similar in economic and social background as mothers in 'Hillcroft'. (Gordon, I., 1974). In a personal communication, Dr L. Burton-White, Director of the Harvard Pre-school Project, which includes a number of interventionist projects spanning the full spectrum from the least advantaged to the most affluent, writes that he has found that by "using warm, sensitive people with ideas rooted in research rather

than in intuitions or traditions, such programs can succeed". If, as has been suggested (Burton-White, L., 1974), the roots of intelligence are laid in the very early years and the mother-child relationship is the vital part, then the real cause for concern is not so much that these mothers do not use pre-school provision, but that so many young women are trying to cope with families, when they lack the maturity, the knowledge and resources to do so adequately.

It is in this direction that new ways of enabling mothers to extend their abilities should be sought. There is a need to start long before the time children have reached playgroup age, and even before mothers first attend an ante-natal clinic. If the role of the husband is really a key to helping a mother cope with the physical and mental demands of her children's pre-school years, then schools should not only be concerned with teaching about child care, but on deepening understanding of human relationships.

This study, which began with concern over non take-up of pre-school provision, has ended with the focus of attention on the crucial nature of the mother-child relationship and the need to recognise its importance in early childhood, and therefore, in any pre-school programme. If we want to ensure that children from some of the most vulnerable families are not at a considerable disadvantage when they start school at four or five, then different, earlier and more flexible strategies are required. This is not to argue against the extension of existing provision: parents are still clamouring for more places at nursery schools, day care centres and playgroups. For these families, such facilities are necessary. It is simply to suggest that current orthodox provision is unlikely to meet the needs of many others whose children would benefit most. If we are to help these families, new approaches are called for, with the emphasis directed initially on the needs of the mother - who must be helped first if she in turn is to help her child.

CHAPTER XI

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APPENDIX III

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C.U.P.

Appendix I: Schedule

(available on request)

Appendix II

Comparison between response of mothers in Dr. Peter Saxby's Devon Study and in 'Hillcroft', to various aspects of playgroup practice

One set of results in this study, which could be compared directly with a similar group of mothers in another part of the country, showed marked resemblances. These were mothers' ratings of various aspects of playgroup practice, according to the Grid first used by Dr. Peter Saxby, Senior Psychologist at the Moorhaven Hospital, Ivybridge, Devon, with mothers in four local playgroups.

Dr. Saxby believed that the playgroup had much potential for integrating a community and offering enrichment for the lives of both mothers and children. He therefore carried out the survey to try to find out what attitudes of mothers involved in playgroups were.

Table IIS: 1

Comparison of samples in Devon and 'Hillcroft'

	Devon	'Hillcroft'
Number in sample	168	77
Av. age of mothers	31	27
Av. no. of children per family	2.5	2.2

Response in Devon was by questionnaire returned anonymously, compared with face to face replies in 'Hillcroft'.

Both groups of mothers rated social interaction the most important activity - the opportunity for children both to play together and to make friends with adults other than their mothers. The chance to develop emotional independence came second and readiness for school work third. Mothers in the Devon investigation and in 'Hillcroft' all saw the greatest benefits in playgroup participation for their children rather than for themselves; the lowest rating in both studies was for obtaining advice from other mothers and supervisors. There was therefore quite striking consensus of opinion regarding the relative importance of different aspects of playgroup practice.

... cont.

Table IIS: 2

Comparison of mothers' attitudes to playgroup practice

	% of Devon mothers for whom item was of 'very great importance'	% of 'Hillcroft' mothers for whom item was of 'very great importance'
Importance for Child		
1. Social interaction	80	91
2. Development of social interaction	70	79
3. Readiness for school work	60	71
Importance for Mothers		
1. Advice from mothers' supervisors	25	26
2. Friendship with other mothers	35	32
3. Free time	40	37

Appendix III

The Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Measure

The Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, discussed in Chapter V, was included in this study as an experimental measure. The expressed purpose of the scale (Rotter 1966) was to assess the extent to which subjects felt themselves able to direct their own lives and the degree of their belief in 'fate', 'luck' or 'chance'. Studies referred to in Chapter IV suggested that in addition to practical handicaps associated with poverty, psychological disincentives were inhibiting the use of various facilities (Morris, Hatch, Chipman 1966; Nakagawa 1971), and that these were associated with feelings of powerlessness. It has been argued too that a change in Locus of Control is the necessary forerunner of any cognitive changes in disadvantaged children (Shore, Milgram and Milansky, 1971). More recently, a Social Reaction Inventory (a modification of the Rotter I-E Scale) was used in an investigation of a home-oriented approach to disadvantaged families in Florida; results have encouraged the view that the Social Reaction Inventory may be a useful instrument for use with parents and that it was predictive not only of some of the facets of how they organise their homes but also the later performance of their children (Gordon I, 1975). It seemed reasonable, nevertheless, that if non-use of pre-school provision was associated with feelings of powerlessness as measured by the Rotter I-E Scale, then it might prove a useful predictor. It was therefore included.

Respondents were given a series of 20 paired items (Appendix III:R) and asked to choose the statement which most nearly approximated to their feeling. An immediate, rather than a considered, response was required. It was anticipated that the resulting scores, accruing only when the response showed belief that forces other than those under the control of the subject were operating, would (1) conform to a normal distribution, and (2) that the mean of the distribution would reflect the degree to which the group tended towards 'internal or external locus of control'. In the literature, the following means are cited for particular groups and are given below to illustrate the point (Rotter 1966).

Table APIII: 1

Example of Rotter I-E Scale Means and Standard Deviations in Test Groups (Rotter 1966)

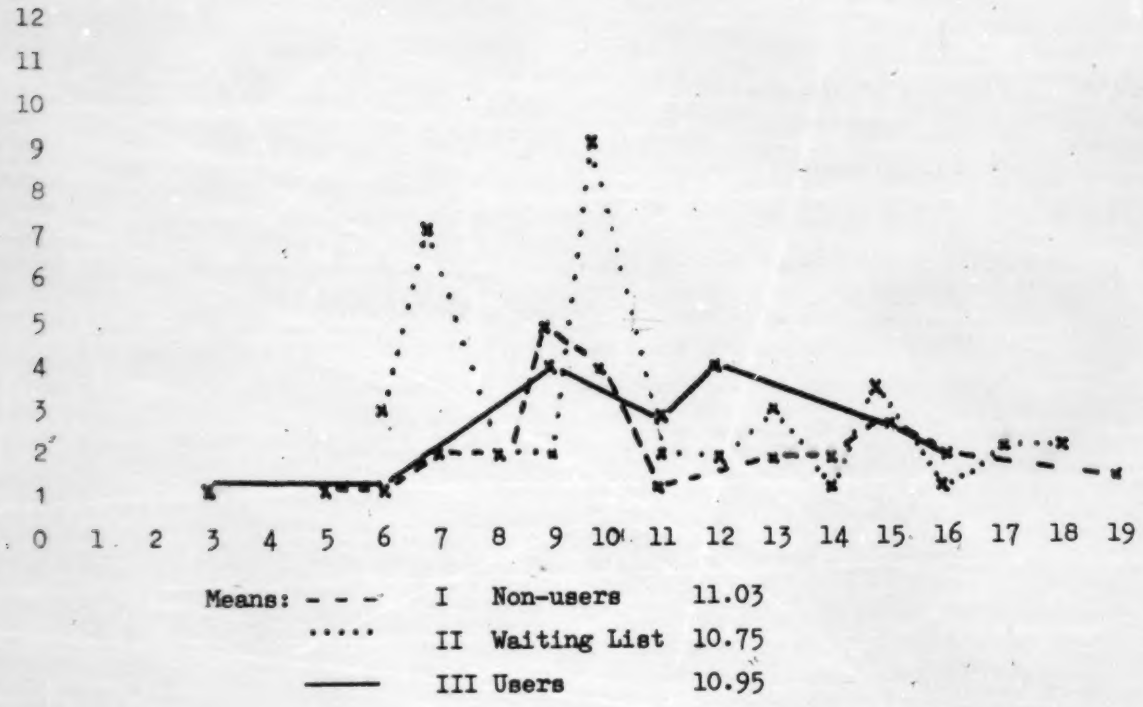
Subjects	Number	Sex	Mean	S.D.	Experimenter
Ohio State University (Group)	575	M	8.15	3.88	Rotter 1966
National stratified sample	1000	M & F	8.50	3.74	Franklin 1963
18 yr. old subjects from Boston area (Individual)	57	M & F	9.56	4.10	Crowne and Conn 1965
Prisoners, age 18-26	80	M	7.72	3.65	Ladwig 1963

In 'Hillcroft', the test was administered during interviews. The first three distributions of scores were based on stated intentions and before the opening of the playgroup.

Table APIII: 2

Distribution of Initial Groups on the Rotter I-E Scale

(N = 87)



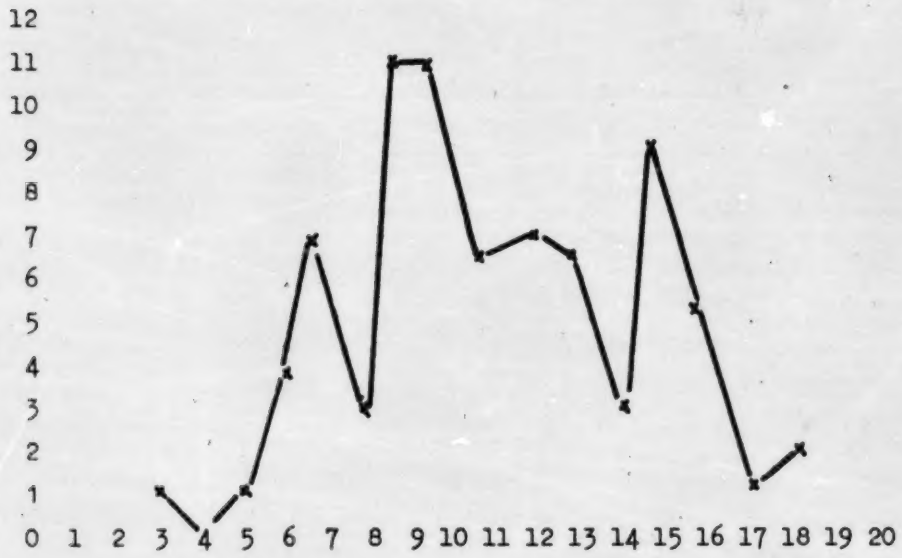
At this stage in the study, results suggested firstly that the Rotter I-E Scale was producing considerable variance. Furthermore, while the sample taken as a whole showed greater tendency to belief in external control, to fate, luck and chance than subjects reported in the American literature, it also indicated that those mothers who preferred not to make use of the provision tended more strongly in this direction than those who either already used pre-school facilities or expressed an intention of doing so.

When distributions for the groups according to behavioural criteria were considered, there was still considerable variance, and the mean score for the sample again tended towards the external end of the continuum.

Table APIII: 3

Distribution of Scores on the Rotter Scale for the Whole Sample

(N = 76)



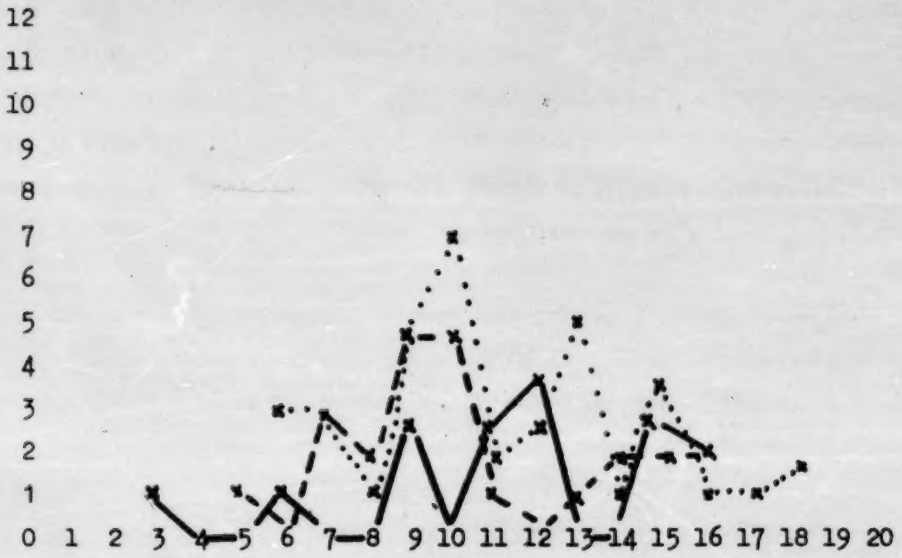
Mean score 10.84

Median 10.5

Standard Deviation 3.43

Table APIII: 4

Distribution of Scores on the Rotter Scale for Groups I, II and III



Group		Mean	Median	S.D.
I	- - - -	10.54	10.25	3.25
II	.....	10.89	10.5	2.93
III	———	11.11	11.3	3.42

Using the Mann-Whitney U-test for non-parametric data to test for differences between samples, gave values of U = 451 (not significant) between Groups I and II; U = 335.5 (not significant) between Groups I and III; and U = 352 (not significant) between Groups II and III. The tests gave no indication that the scores for the three groups were in any way different.

It was therefore clear that the hypothesised correlation between the Rotter I-E scores and the sample divided according to behavioural criteria did not obtain, and that the trend towards lower scores in Group I was in the direction opposite to that anticipated.

Nevertheless, distributions for each of the three groups and for the sample as a whole, suggested a certain bi-modality. It was therefore hypothesised that there might be a correlation between the distributions of the A and B groups and the Rotter I-E Scale, and that the means of the

distribution would show significant differences between the A and B groups.

This, however, was not so. When the sample was divided according to the 'alienation' factor, with low scorers designated A group and high scorers the B group, means were as follows:-

Table APIII: 5

Means for Sample and Subgroups Divided on the 'Alienation' Factor

Major Behavioural Group	A sub-group		B sub-group	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
I	10.5	3.20	10.54	3.44
II	10.60	3.38	11.3	1.89
III	11.18	2.89	11.18	4.18
Sample	10.68	3.31	11.02	3.60

It therefore followed that whatever the Rotter I-E Scale was measuring, it was not the same as the 'alienation' factor, and it did not bear any relationship to non-use, reluctant use or interventionist use of pre-school provision.

There was still the possibility, however, that individual items on the Rotter I-E Scale were differentiating between the A and B groups. Taking 10 per cent as the criteria for rejection of individual items, all showed sufficient variance for item analysis. Using the Q_s statistic, no item achieved more than 3.47, a rho of .46; therefore no item differentiated significantly between A and B group mothers. A straightforward correlation of Rotter I-E scores and A and B group scores generated a rho of - 0.16 for A group and - 0.13 for B group (not significant).

The conclusion must therefore be that scores on the Rotter I-E Scale were not predictive of use or non-use of pre-school provision, nor of non-use, reluctant use and interventionist use, as defined by the 'alienation' factor.

Several aspects suggest that this may be due to weaknesses inherent in the measure when used on an English working class sample. Given its American origin and style of language, the vocabulary could lead to misunderstandings or unwillingness to persevere. Some mothers certainly found

difficulty in completing the questionnaire.

There is also the point that the test was designed for groups and not specifically for individuals. Another element was the possibility (Wedderburn 1974) that the 'myth of democracy' persists in England where, in contrast to America, ordinary people still believe they can affect the nation's destiny by the exercise of their vote.

Such considerations suggest that rather than assume the irrelevance of belief in 'luck, fate and chance', greater attention should be given to refining and validating the measures used.

Appendix III: R

The Rotter I-E Scale

INSTRUCTION SHEET

This is a questionnaire to find out the way in which certain important events in our society affect different people. Each item consists of a pair of alternatives lettered (a) or (b). Please select the one statement of each pair (and only one) which you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Be sure to select the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief: obviously there are no right or wrong answers.

For each item, circle the letter of the alternative which you select.

Please answer these items carefully but do not spend too much time on any one item. Be sure to find an answer for every choice.

In some cases you may discover that you believe both statements or neither one. In such cases, be sure to select the one you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Also try to respond to each item independently when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

1. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.

   b. People's bad luck results from the mistakes they make.

2. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.

   b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

3. a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.

   b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognised no matter how hard he tries.

4. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.

   b. Most students don't realise how much their grades are influenced by chance.

5. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.

   b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

6. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.

   b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.

7. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.

   b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

8. a. In the case of the well prepared student there is never such a thing as an unfair test.

   b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.

9. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.

   b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

10. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.

    b. The world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.

11. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.

    b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.

12. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.

    b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

13. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.

    b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability, luck has little or nothing to do with it.

14. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.

    b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

15. a. Most people don't realise the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.

    b. There really is no such thing as 'luck'.

16. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.

    b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

17. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.

    b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

18. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.

    b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.

19. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the marks they give.

    b. There is a direct connection between how hard one works and the success one gets.

20. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.

    b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

21. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.

    b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people; if they like you, they like you.

22. a. What happens to me is my own doing.

    b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

23. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.

    b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

Appendix IV

Comparison of demand for pre-school provision in "Hillcroft" by age

(figures for the sample expressed as percentages)

Breakdown of Three and Four Year Olds in the Behavioural Sample

No. of families 77
No. of four year olds 40
No. of three year olds 42
Total 82

Group	4 year olds		3 year olds		Total	
	N =	% =	N =	% =	N	%
I	12	30	13	31	25	30
II	15	37.5	22	52	37	45
III	13	32.5	7	17	20	25
Total	40	100	42	100	82	100

Comparison of the Plowden Estimate and 'Hillcroft' Response

Age	Plowden Estimate	'Hillcroft' Response
4 year olds	90%	70%
3 year olds	50%	69%

When only Groups I and II are considered, that is excluding those who were already going out of the area for provision, then 56 per cent of four year olds and 63 per cent of three year olds were reached.

Mothers' responses suggest that the realisation that they would soon be losing their 'babies' when they started school, was a factor which contributed to their reluctance to 'bother' with pre-schooling. Four year olds were more independent, more co-operative and altogether less demanding than three year olds. In contrast, mothers with a lively three year old, faced with the difficulties inherent in flat living, for whom the prospect of school at the statutory school age seemed a long way off, appeared to welcome the respite of a short spell at a playgroup where the child would have the opportunity of playing with other children under supervision, especially if they were not precluded from being there themselves.

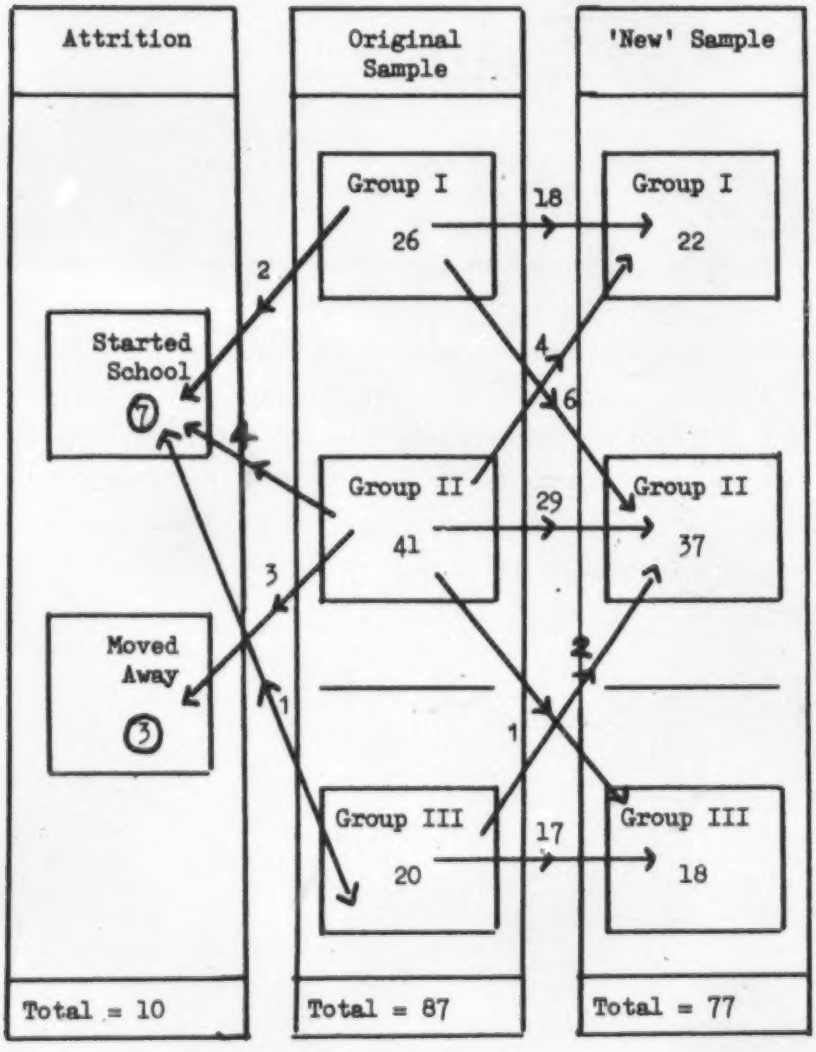
Appendix V

Movements between Groups: A Study of 'Shifters'

Table 1, below, shows the general movements between groups which occurred between the original interviews and the opening of the playgroup. It can be seen that just over ten per cent of subjects 'dropped out' either because they moved out of the area or their children started school at five.

Table 1

Flow Diagram showing Attrition of Sample and Shifts between the Main 'Behavioural' Groups



The ten families who dropped out of the sample were drawn from all three groups and the loss did not upset the sample sizes of the relative groups. The greatest loss was from Group II and this was also the largest group.

Table 2

Percentage Loss of Families to each Major Group

Group	Original Sample	Percentage Loss
I	26	8%
II	41	17%
III	20	1%
Total	87	11%

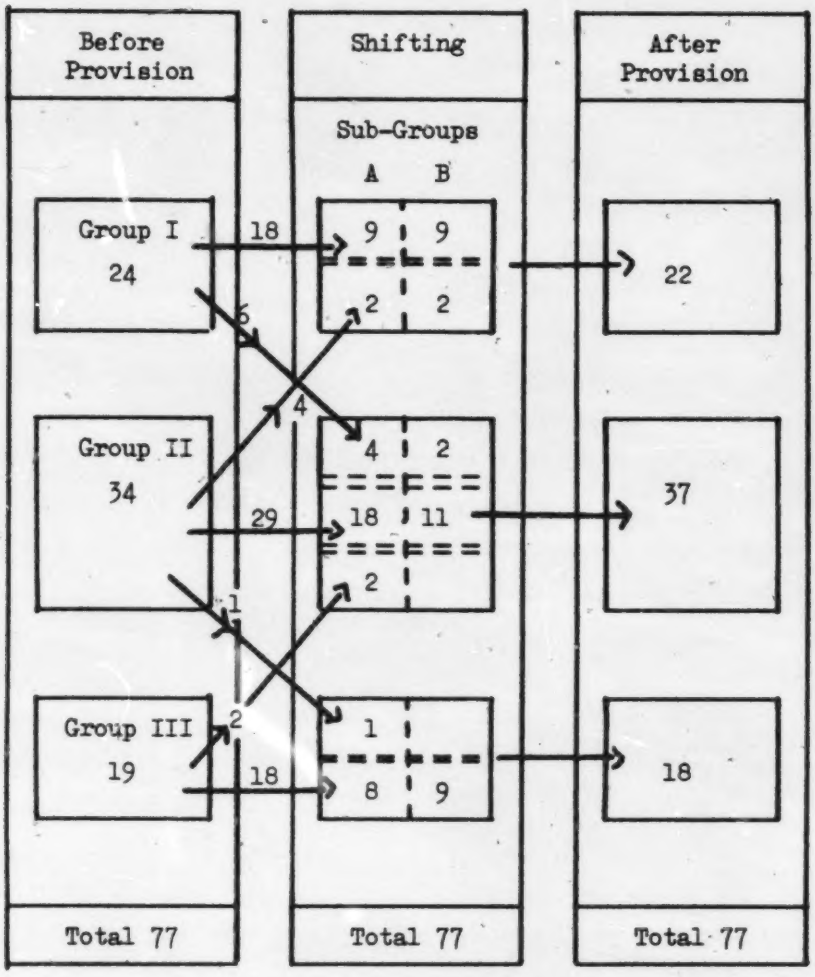
There was nothing to suggest that the ten families who 'dropped out' were in any way significantly different from other families in the sample; they were evenly divided between A and B groups.

When characteristics of those families within the new sample which had changed from one group to another are examined, some differences do emerge. In the diagram below, the numerical movement from each group is shown on the line of the arrows; and the way those numbers were spread between the A and B groups appear in the centre boxes.

Table 3

Changes in the groupings of families, between the time of interview and the availability of provision

(indicating membership of sub-groups A and B)



Group I those who did not use provision

Group II waiting list and those who used provision

Group III those already going outside the area

As the diagram shows, the number of mothers who changed major groups was small; 13 mothers (17 per cent of the sample) changed their minds about use of the facility.

Group I

Six mothers moved from Group I to Group II, that is, they decided, after all, to send their children to the playgroup. Four of these were in the 'a' sub-group. One had evidently had second thoughts, since at the first interview she stated that she did not approve of education for the under fives. 'If you have them, you should look after them yourself.' It is possible that she had been influenced by her friend and near neighbour who, at the time of the interview, had 'thought it out and decided against for the moment for fear the child would feel rejected with a new baby'. The eight months of building delays had perhaps enabled this family to build up the child's security so that he was ready to go to the playgroup. Two other 'a' sub-group mothers had simply waited until they knew more about how the new playgroup was to be run before committing themselves to use the provision.

The two 'b' sub-group mothers disliked the estate and were hostile to their neighbours. One was a mother on her own and inclined to be aggressive. Although both these mothers started at the play group, neither of them continued, alleging that their children had difficulties with others, that 'it was too much effort' and 'not important enough to bother'. One mother felt that she gave her children as much at home as they got from a play-group, but said she would make use of a nursery class.

Group II

One mother amongst those who were on the waiting list for the new playgroup, felt that the building delays meant that her child would not benefit. Accordingly, she took her to a playgroup outside the area and did not think it wise to make another change so soon before the child would start school at five. She was an 'a' sub-group mother.

Four mothers who had put their names down, did not take up the places offered them for their children. Two of these mothers fell in an 'a' sub-group and two in the 'b' sub-group. One 'a' group mother had changed her mind about the playgroup, having decided that she could give her child anything she needed in the home. The three other mothers had all had another baby in the intervening months. Both 'b' group mothers said they 'just couldn't manage it'; the 'a' group mother said that having thought it over, she and her husband had decided against sending their child for the time being, in case the older under five might feel he was 'being pushed out and not wanted now there was a new baby'.

Group III

Two mothers (both 'a' subgroup) who were already sending their children to playgroups outside the area, decided on reflection, to send them to the local group. They felt that the children could cope with the change and that advantages would outweigh disadvantages. Both children (who knew each other) settled well.

Discussion

It must be stressed that no conclusions can be drawn from so small a group. Nevertheless, mothers' reactions to 'new' babies throw an interesting side light on the situation. Too much must not be read into the fact that three of the four mothers who decided not to take up places open to them had recent babies; it is not known what proportion of those mothers who did take up places also had babies about the time the playgroup opened.

Nevertheless, the fact that a new baby in the family was cited as the reason for a change in decision suggests that this may be an important variable to be taken into consideration in any future investigation of take-up of pre-school provision.

Appendix VI

Additional Tables

One-Parent Families by Six Sub-Groups

Sub-Group		One Parent	Two Parent	Total
Ia	N	0	11	11
	%	0	100.0	14.3
Ib	N	1	10	11
	%	9.1	90.9	14.3
IIa	N	0	24	24
	%	0	100.0	31.2
IIb	N	2	11	13
	%	15.4	84.6	16.9
IIIa	N	1	6	7
	%	14.3	85.7	9.1
IIIb	N	4	7	11
	%	36.4	63.6	14.3
Total	N	8	69	77
	%	10.4	89.6	100.0

$x^2 = 12.51$ Df = 5 P .02

Attitude to Neighbours

Sub-Group		'Very Friendly'	Keep to Selves	Unfriendly (Don't Mix)	Total
Ia	N	5	5	1	11
	%	45.5	45.5	9.1	14.3
Ib	N	3	4	4	11
	%	27.3	36.4	36.4	14.3
IIa	N	19	5	0	24
	%	79.2	20.8	0	31.2
IIb	N	5	5	3	13
	%	38.5	38.5	23.1	16.9
IIIa	N	4	3	0	7
	%	57.1	42.9	0	9.1
IIIb	N	1	7	3	11
	%	9.1	63.6	27.3	14.3
Total	N	37	29	11	77
	%	48.1	37.7	14.3	100.0

$x^2 = 24.08$ Df = 10 P .007

Incidence of 'Messy' Play

Sub-Group		Regular Use	Occasional	None	Total
Ia	N	2	9	0	11
	%	18.2	81.8	0	14.3
Ib	N	3	4	4	11
	%	27.3	36.4	36.4	14.3
IIa	N	8	15	1	24
	%	33.3	62.5	4.2	31.2
IIb	N	1	5	7	13
	%	7.7	38.5	53.8	16.9
IIIa	N	4	3	0	7
	%	57.1	42.9	0	9.1
IIIb	N	1	5	5	11
	%	9.1	45.5	45.5	14.3
Total	N	19	41	17	77
	%	24.7	53.2	22.1	100.0

$X^2 = 27.14$ Df = 10 P .002

Use of Finger Paints

Sub-Group		Used Paints	Did Not Use Paints	Total
Ia	N	0	11	11
	%	0	100.0	14.3
Ib	N	0	11	11
	%	0	100.0	14.3
IIa	N	5	19	24
	%	20.8	79.2	31.2
IIb	N	0	13	13
	%	0	100.0	16.9
IIIa	N	4	3	7
	%	57.1	42.9	9.1
IIIb	N	1	10	11
	%	9.1	90.9	14.3
Total	N	10	67	77
	%	13.0	87.0	100.0

$x^2 = 18.75$ Df = 5 P .002

Unsupervised Use of Roadway as Play Area

Sub-Group		N/A	Used Road	Did Not Use Road	Total
Ia	N	0	1	10	11
	%	0	9.1	90.9	14.3
Ib	N	1	5	5	11
	%	9.1	45.5	45.5	14.3
IIa	N	0	4	20	24
	%	0	16.7	83.3	31.2
IIb	N	0	7	6	13
	%	0	53.8	46.2	16.9
IIIa	N	0	1	6	7
	%	0	14.3	85.7	9.1
IIIb	N	0	6	5	11
	%	0	54.5	45.5	14.3
Total	N	1	24	52	77
	%	1.3	31.2	67.5	100.0

$x^2 = 19.36$ Df = 10 P .03

Use of Park

Sub-Group		Daily	1-2 Weekly	Less Often	'Never'	Total
Ia	N	5	4	2	0	11
	%	45.5	36.4	18.2	0	14.3
Ib	N	1	3	4	3	11
	%	9.1	27.3	36.4	27.3	14.3
IIa	N	2	11	9	2	24
	%	8.3	45.8	37.5	8.3	31.2
IIb	N	0	8	5	0	13
	%	0	61.5	38.5	0	16.9
IIIa	N	0	5	2	0	7
	%	0	71.4	28.6	0	9.1
IIIb	N	0	6	5	0	11
	%	0	54.5	45.5	0	14.3
Total	N	8	37	27	5	77
	%	10.4	48.1	35.1	6.5	100.0

$x^2 = 30.63$ Df = 15 P .009

Use of Large Brushes

Sub-Group		Used Lge. Brushes	Did Not Use Lge. Brushes	Total
Ia	N	0	11	11
	%	0	100.0	14.3
Ib	N	0	11	11
	%	0	100.0	14.3
IIa	N	4	20	24
	%	16.7	83.3	31.2
IIb	N	0	13	13
	%	0	100.0	16.9
IIIa	N	3	4	7
	%	42.9	57.1	9.1
IIIb	N	1	10	11
	%	9.1	90.9	14.3
Total	N	8	69	77
	%	10.4	89.6	100.0

$x^2 = 13.01$ Df = 5 P .02

Attitude of Mother to Child

Sub-Group		Child First	Integrated	Child Last	Total
Ia	N	3	8	0	11
	%	27.3	72.7	0	14.3
Ib	N	3	5	3	11
	%	27.3	45.5	27.3	14.3
IIa	N	5	19	0	24
	%	20.8	79.2	0	31.2
IIb	N	3	8	2	13
	%	23.1	61.5	15.4	16.9
IIIa	N	1	6	0	7
	%	14.3	85.7	0	9.1
IIIb	N	1	6	4	11
	%	9.1	54.5	36.4	14.3
Total	N	16	52	9	77
	%	20.8	67.5	11.7	100.0

$x^2 = 16.42$ Df = 10 P .08

Whether Mother Heard of Play-group Through the Tenants' Association

Sub-Group		N/A	Yes	No	Total
Ia	N	0	6	5	11
	%	0	54.5	45.5	14.3
Ib	N	0	3	8	11
	%	0	27.3	72.7	14.3
IIa	N	0	18	6	24
	%	0	75.0	25.0	31.2
IIb	N	1	3	9	13
	%	7.7	23.1	69.2	16.9
IIIa	N	0	2	5	7
	%	0	28.6	71.4	9.1
IIIb	N	0	3	8	11
	%	0	27.3	72.7	14.3
Total	N	1	35	41	77
	%	1.3	45.5	53.2	100.0

$x^2 = 19.55$ Df = 10 P .03

Preferred Type of Administration of Provision

Sub-Group		N/A	Mothers	Community Groups (no off.)	Tenants' Assoc.	Council	Church	Owner Sup.	Other	Total
Ia	N	2	5	1	0	1	1	1	0	11
	%	18.2	45.5	9.1	0	9.1	9.1	9.1	0	14.3
Ib	N	2	1	1	4	2	1	0	0	11
	%	18.2	9.1	9.1	36.4	18.2	9.1	0	0	14.3
IIa	N	0	9	2	6	6	0	0	1	24
	%	0	37.5	8.3	25.0	25.0	0	0	4.2	31.2
IIb	N	2	5	0	2	4	0	0	0	13
	%	15.4	38.5	0	15.4	30.8	0	0	0	16.9
IIIa	N	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	1	7
	%	0	28.6	0	0	28.6	0	28.6	14.3	9.1
IIIb	N	0	1	0	1	8	0	1	0	11
	%	0	9.1	0	9.1	72.7	0	9.1	0	14.3
Total	N	6	23	4	13	23	2	4	2	77
	%	7.8	29.9	5.2	16.9	29.9	2.6	5.2	2.6	100.0

$x^2 = 51.37$ Df = 35 P .03

Present Age of Mother

Sub-Group		18-19.11	20-21.11	22-25+	Total
Ia	N	1	7	3	11
	%	9.1	63.6	27.3	14.3
Ib	N	4	6	1	11
	%	36.4	54.5	9.1	14.3
IIa	N	1	11	12	24
	%	4.2	45.8	50.0	31.2
IIb	N	0	9	4	13
	%	0	69.2	30.8	16.9
IIIa	N	0	2	5	7
	%	0	28.6	71.4	9.1
IIIb	N	1	5	5	11
	%	9.1	45.5	45.5	14.3
Total	N	7	40	30	77
	%	9.1	51.9	39.0	100.0

$X^2 = 19.40$ Df = 10 P .03

Mothers' Health

Sub-Group		Good	Average	Poor	Total
Ia	N	4	7	0	11
	%	36.4	63.6	0	14.3
Ib	N	2	3	6	11
	%	18.2	27.3	54.5	14.3
IIa	N	14	9	1	24
	%	58.3	37.5	4.2	31.2
IIb	N	3	6	4	13
	%	23.1	46.2	30.8	16.9
IIIa	N	3	2	2	7
	%	42.9	28.6	28.6	9.1
IIIb	N	5	4	2	11
	%	45.5	36.4	18.2	14.3
Total	N	31	31	15	77
	%	40.3	40.3	19.5	100.0

$x^2 = 19.88$ Df = 10 P .03